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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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PUBLIC FORUM OF THE TRANSIT :
TASK FORCE :
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A hearing in the above-entitled matter was held on
September 30, 2015, commencing at 6:00 p.m., at 100 Maryland
Avenue, 3rd Floor Hearing Room, Rockville, Maryland 20850
before:

Mark Winston
Chairman

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WINSTON: Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. My name is Mark Winston. I am the chairman of the County Executive's Transit Task Force. Welcome to the public forum being held by the Transit Task Force this evening. The purpose of this public form is to receive comments from members of the public on the public draft of the Task Force report. The public draft was published on the Task Force's website on September 16th. The record will be open until October 6th, 2015 so that in the event that anyone here or not here wishes to submit comments on the public draft they may do so through October 6th. Interested persons may post their comments on the website until then and may also post statements made this evening on the website if they wish.

Our procedure this evening will be very similar to when we had our public forum in June. A speakers list was created based on telephone calls to the designated number. Speakers are listed in the order in which they are registered. We will invite panels of five people to the table to make their statements. Each speaker will have three minutes. There will be no substitution of persons testifying and no seating of time from one person to another. However, if, if we reach a particular person and that person is not here, I will try to be somewhat flexible to fit them in later in the program. Speakers, of course,

1 are invited to submit written comments of their remarks.
2 And this process of five member panels will be repeated
3 until we've completed the list.

4 Members of the Task Force may ask questions of
5 speakers. We will have a limit of two questions per
6 speaker. And let me say to my colleagues that this does not
7 mean that questions are encouraged, simply that they may be
8 asked. We would like to be able to end this public forum on
9 the same calendar date that it begins.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Appreciate that.

11 MR. WINSTON: Before beginning the public forum, I
12 want to thank all of my colleagues on the Task Force for
13 their participation and service in this endeavor over the
14 last few months.

15 We will begin presentations now with the first
16 panel. And would the following people please come to the
17 table. And again, in advance, I apologize in the even that
18 I mispronounce anyone's name, but I will do the best I can.
19 The first panel includes Harriet Quinn, Brian Altman,
20 Roberta Faul-Zeitler, Nancy Abeles and Tina Slater. Hi.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hi.

22 MR. WINSTON: Speakers should push the button
23 while they are speaking and then when they're done, please
24 push the button again so that the next person's microphone
25 can be activated.

1 Our first speaker this evening is Ms. Harriet
2 Quinn. Ms. Quinn.

3 MS. QUINN: Good evening, excuse me. Good
4 evening. My name is Harriet Quinn. I'm a resident of
5 Silver Spring and serve as a volunteer member of two
6 transportation committees for civic organizations. I thank
7 you for your work and for the opportunity to speak to you
8 for three minutes.

9 I and my neighbors, many of whom are regular
10 transit using servers, have been following and studying this
11 process for over four years. To be clear, this is not about
12 whether people support transit or not. Most of us have
13 tried to keep an open mind regarding solutions to address
14 some of the area's mobility challenges. Unfortunately, as
15 with the previous Task Force reports, this draft report
16 presents a false choice between BRT or nothing. The report
17 is mostly speculative regarding implementation and benefits
18 and the financing recommendations are premature since only
19 one of the four routes you're proposing for Phase I of the
20 BRT system is actually an engineering design phase when more
21 definitive costs would be determined. So most residents are
22 even less likely to support breaking the charter limits in
23 order to fund a new, independent agency for the purpose of
24 financing, building, operating and maintaining an over-
25 wrapping bus rapid transit system and a new agency that is

1 yet to be justified to the residents you propose to pay for
2 it. A majority of residents are interested in the most cost
3 effective and up-to-date solutions for transportation
4 challenges, not a one size fits all that excludes a
5 comprehensive look at our overall transportation needs.
6 There are smart, cost effective improvements to our existing
7 systems that can be done now that will increase ridership
8 and decrease congestion. Some of which I won't have time to
9 mention, but I will try to include.

10 I'd like to provide a list of facts for your
11 consideration that are not contained within the report. In
12 2012, this same Task Force estimated that the capital cost
13 for 162 mile, 23 route system would be \$1.8 billion. At the
14 time, Mr. Leggett said we could not afford \$1.8 billion.
15 The latest proposal for 3 1/2 routes, 48 miles for a Phase I
16 introduction has an estimated capital cost of \$2.5 billion.
17 When including financing and operations costs, the estimated
18 cost as shown in Appendix 6-B is between \$5.7 and \$6.2
19 billion. We have many needs and wants in the County
20 including the need to address over-crowded schools where 16
21 of 25 clusters are over 105 percent capacity. There are
22 over 400 portable classrooms and many students eat lunch at
23 10:30 in the morning or worse, eat on the floor because
24 there isn't enough seating in the cafeteria. What makes
25 this proposal affordable? Earlier this year, Mr. Leggett

1 announced that there would be a significant property tax
2 increase next year. Perhaps as much as 10 to 11 percent.
3 Just to keep pace with the existing spending levels.

4 I have a number of proposals for implementation to
5 improve existing service and I hope you'll read the rest of
6 my testimony. Thank you.

7 MR. WINSTON: Thank you. The next person on the
8 list is Mr. Brian Altman. Mr. Altman.

9 MS. CARRIER: Press the big button.

10 MR. ALTMAN: Good evening. Thank you. My name is
11 Brian Altman. I'm a resident of Gaithersburg. And I just
12 want to make three quick points.

13 First, thank you very much for the opportunity to
14 speak with you and thank you for the work and the attention
15 that you're providing to this important issue. As a
16 disabled resident of Montgomery County, as a blind person in
17 particular, transit and high quality transit is not an
18 option, it's a necessity. Transit is how I navigate our
19 environment, how I navigate our community. And the trips
20 that I don't take on transit are not because I don't want
21 to. They're because the transit is not able to provide
22 those trips for me. So I strongly support bus rapid
23 transit. I support it because it will provide the kinds of
24 ways to get to places that I need to get to. That other
25 people who live in the community the way I live also need.

1 By having dedicated lanes, by having long routes, by having
2 routes on the kinds of thoroughfares that this plan provides
3 is an incredible advance for this community and for the
4 people who use it like the way I do. And I would just ask
5 for one more thing as this plan moves forward and for your
6 consideration. And I would strongly ask that you consider
7 accessibility in the details of the plan, making sure that
8 the, the stations, the vehicles, the thoroughfares to and
9 from are all accessible to those who are blind and have
10 other disabilities so that we can safely make use of this
11 resource. Thank you.

12 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Altman. Ms. Faul-
13 Zeitler.

14 MS. FAUL-ZEITLER: Good evening. My name is
15 Bobbie Faul-Zeitler and I'm a Silver Spring resident. I
16 want to thank you for this opportunity to comment tonight.
17 I am not convinced after the County has spent \$60 million in
18 studies for the CCT, the purple line and the earliest phases
19 of studies for bus rapid transit that we are ready for or
20 need a transit authority. Here is six reasons why not.
21 Metro is in crisis. That's the consensus at major Federal
22 agencies and just today, the NTSB has proposed transferring
23 Metro oversight to the Federal Railroad Administration to
24 deal with critical safety issues. Our jurisdiction needs to
25 address Metro's lapses. If we fail, the blue sky plans for

1 rapid transit cannot succeed. Our first and over-arching
2 priority must be to insure Metro's well-being for decades to
3 come.

4 Two. Three of the four rapid transit lines, 29,
5 355 and Veirs Mill, are in the earliest phases of study with
6 SHA and the Corridor Advisory Committees. I'm part of 29
7 South CAC and would like to insure that my views and other
8 members going forward in the months ahead will be carefully
9 considered and balanced against the aspiration to have a BRT
10 line in place "in the next four years," as Roger Berliner
11 has stated.

12 Three. How deep are our pockets? Business and
13 residential property owners already have the undue burden of
14 \$100 million a year in energy tax that was intended to get
15 the County over the great recession. Now it's a permanent
16 fixture of the annual budget. And Mr. Leggett has stated
17 publicly he does not intend to sunset the tax.

18 Four. The proposed ITA financing options are
19 punitive for residential property owners and small
20 businesses. Every homeowner in the County would be on the
21 hook to help pay for the rapid transit system capital
22 improvements with higher property taxes. For the RT
23 operating budget, there would be a corridor tax. And if
24 that isn't enough, the study also proposes an increase in
25 sales tax.

1 Five. Our future tax burden actually lightens the
2 load on developers and site owners to only pay a fraction of
3 the millions it costs to create new intersections, road
4 improvements and transit stations that benefit their new
5 development. How is that fair?

6 Six. Eminent domain. The right to acquire or
7 take privately owned property would be removed from State
8 authority and its procedures and put into the County
9 Council's annual CIP process where a harried homeowner would
10 get three minutes to testify to try and save his land and
11 property while competing with every other capital
12 improvement appeal. This is a lunatic idea.

13 I'm for sensible growth just as I was when I
14 formed Citizens for Sensible Development 20 years ago.
15 There is nothing sensible about this proposal.

16 MR. WINSTON: Thank you very much. Our next
17 speaker is Nancy Abeles.

18 MS. ABELES: I am Nancy Abeles from Bethesda Crest
19 HOA and the 355 BRT corridor and COG Transportation Board
20 Citizens Advisory Committees.

21 Having sat in on Task Force meetings this summer,
22 I regret to report to the public why their recommendations
23 fail to fulfill Executive Leggett's request for broader
24 input in a full range of options. So flummoxed was one Task
25 Force member by the gap between the group's stated mission

1 and their actual proceedings, that she asked via email based
2 on last night's discussion I'm confused about the ultimate
3 goal. Are we supposed to recommend a specific financing
4 plan or options? The answer was a specific plan because the
5 Task Force is commandeered by an inner corps group with a
6 set agenda from their 2012 report. The corps members
7 ignored regional priorities to maintain and enhance existing
8 transit infrastructure. They failed to examine local ITAs
9 that exist like that of Northern Virginia, which exemplifies
10 best practices, or WMATA, which provides painful lessons
11 learned. Nor did they consult locally based national expert
12 resources like the Transportation Research Board, which
13 compares transit tax revenue mechanisms. The corps rejected
14 interface, interface with their own BRT project citizens
15 advisory committees. They want to restrict these groups
16 from discussing costs or funding which are both components
17 of implementation alternatives decisions.

18 Preliminary studies indicate that the Task Force
19 preferred version of BRT won't match ridership levels to
20 justify required financial investment. But the Task Force
21 recently proclaimed that the ITA should control system
22 design. Design, however, is already underway. Using the
23 community stakeholder feedback, the corps members
24 strategically omitted from their original report and tried
25 to repress throughout the CAC formation process at the

1 Executive's Rapid Transit Steering Committee meetings.
2 Regional planning derives from Council of Government
3 projections. The COG can predict population and job growth,
4 but can't foresee real estate development. Their experts
5 admit that the district's comeback wasn't on their radar,
6 but the Task Force asserts that development will unfold in a
7 prescribed way to justify their proposed form of BRT. So
8 they performed no debt risk analysis nor considered how if
9 the tax base doesn't grow as planned, defaults could impact
10 existing taxpayers. Nor did they do a comparison matrix
11 between ITA and municipal funding, which is what taxpayers
12 and the County Council most need to see.

13 The purpose of an ITA is not to tax but to insure
14 coherent regional planning say experts like Jonathan
15 Halpern, U.S. Treasury Infrastructure Finance Advisor,
16 former World Bank lead analyst economist for infrastructure
17 and infrastructure economics professor at Georgetown
18 University. He is a County resident and I consulted him on
19 the Task Force's recommendations. He predicted this ITAs
20 BRT will result in large gaps, overlaps and rigidities. The
21 proposed ITA exemplifies what he terms the tendency for
22 executing agencies to push their favorite projects,
23 skewering the planning studies to suit their interests.
24 Often bigger is better without regard to cost effectiveness
25 or cost modal and inter-modal choices. Thank you.

1 MR. WINSTON: Thank you. The next speaker, if she
2 is here, is Tina Slater. I do not see her and we will pass
3 on Ms. Slater.

4 That completes our first panel. Would the second
5 panel please come forward? That is Kevin Harris, Ilaya
6 Hopkins, Jerry Garson, Paula Bienenfeld and Carole Barth.

7 Mr. Harris, welcome to the Task Force.

8 MR. HARRIS: Thank you. Good to be here for my
9 three minute and 20 second presentation. My name is Kevin
10 Harris. I reside at 10306 Edgewood Avenue. I'm testifying
11 in my role as chairman of the Greater Four Corners Alliance.
12 I'm a senior, I'm a member of the BRT Citizens Advisory
13 Committee for Route 29 South. I'm a former senior planner
14 for COG and secretary of my son's PTSA. And I own a
15 catering business in the County.

16 I'm here tonight to urge you not to support
17 potential legislation that would enable the creation of an
18 ITA. The first reason I'm urging you to pose this is that
19 there has been no data presented that would demonstrate that
20 a BRT would solve the congestion problems we're facing. The
21 study is still in the conceptual stage. Not close to
22 presenting alternatives or the engineering details necessary
23 to provide defined cost estimates. So your proposal to
24 finance this is breaking the voter approved charter limits
25 is extremely premature. I've sat through four Citizens

1 Advisory Committee meetings over the last five months and we
2 have still not been presented with the most basic traffic
3 data, including the number of daily trips and any
4 information about the destinations of drivers. Any observer
5 can see that most of the traffic flowing south in the
6 morning rush hour is destined for the beltway along Route
7 29, which means that none of these drivers would be
8 candidates for taking the BRT. What data has been presented
9 to the Task Force by Sage Consultants is completely
10 implausible. They have projected a net increase of over
11 39,000 jobs at the White Oak Science Gateway based on a
12 maximum build-out of over 13 million square feet of possible
13 commercial space. This comes at the same time as the owners
14 of the property are openly lowering commercial development
15 estimates, have requested that the majority of the first
16 phase of development be residential and cannot at this stage
17 identify one commercial tenant for the site. And if this is
18 changed, Jonathan, I'd love to hear about it. This widely
19 irresponsible modeling casts doubt on the validity of the
20 entire report.

21 Secondly, the County does not have a strong enough
22 track record in maintaining existing infrastructure to be
23 entrusted with building five transit projects. My
24 neighborhood was scheduled for a full HMA paving this
25 summer, but I was recently told we have been postponed until

1 next year because there were complications with paving in
2 the Hillandale neighborhood. How can the County Executive
3 come to the taxpayers with a proposal to spend \$2.2 billion
4 worth of new transit projects when they can't even pave two
5 neighborhoods in one summer?

6 Thirdly, the County needs to attend to the
7 pressing matters at hand, namely, education that will lead
8 to greater economic growth for the County. This past year
9 the Council cut 36,000,380 positions. At the same time,
10 Governor Hogan announced that he would support a scaled back
11 purple line only if Montgomery and Prince George's County
12 kicked in an additional \$50 million. Our County Executive
13 said that, of course, we could work out those details. For
14 me the details are providing a classroom with less than 36
15 students, which is what my child now has at Simms. And it
16 also includes paving my roads. Let's begin with the details
17 of paving the streets and educating our children before we
18 incur an additional \$4 billion in debt. Thank you.

19 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Harris. I see that
20 Ms. Hopkins is not here and we will also pass her testimony
21 at this time. The next person on the list is Mr. Jerry
22 Garson. Mr. Garson.

23 MR. GARSON: I am Jerry Garson, the, I am Jerry
24 Garson, the transportation chairman of the Montgomery County
25 Civic Federation, Inc. I'm also on the CAC for 355 South.

1 The question posed to our residents and businesses
2 are can the residents and businesses in Montgomery County
3 afford all the proposed capital costs of \$2.2 billion to
4 partially build four routes. The projection of the TTF
5 report is that it will cost the residents and businesses at
6 least \$5.7 billion through 2046. These proposals will
7 result in significant increases in real estate taxes,
8 probably well over seven percent stated in the report. We
9 do not know what the interest rate was used for these 30-
10 year bonds. This should be disclosed in advance of any
11 proposal being introduced in the State legislature. The
12 question that needs to be answered is what are the total
13 costs and the related benefits to the current residents? A
14 full analysis has not been performed. For example, the plan
15 does not appear to provide for replacement buses over the
16 next 30 years or even recognize that the Agency's budget has
17 administrative overhead costs for which funding is required.

18 The real question is how many jobs and businesses
19 will the County lose over the next 10 to 20 years if the BRT
20 system is built? In the last 10 years the County lost 3,325
21 jobs, according to DLLR. With Amazon and other online
22 merchants taking over a significant amount of retail sales,
23 we ask how many retail jobs will we lose? Not gain along
24 355 during the next 30 years. Elimination of some of the
25 left turns on Rockville Pike will discourage shoppers

1 resulting in more congestion and pollution by forcing
2 vehicles to move around to reach destinations and probably
3 will lead to elimination of hundreds of businesses and
4 probable loss of well over 20,000 jobs. Traffic has
5 actually decreased over much of Route 355 during the last 10
6 years per SHA. Higher taxes will help improve economic
7 development in other areas outside of Montgomery County.
8 The sketch provided by, by Rockville City Government shows
9 that there will be room for two vehicles to make a left turn
10 at each light cycle or 30 vehicles per hour on MD 355. Left
11 turns at other intersections would be prohibited with BRT
12 constructed along the median. This will help eliminate a
13 large number of businesses on Maryland Route 355 between now
14 and then and you will actually have less traffic if you get
15 rid of the most of the businesses. Some easier and cheaper
16 alternatives are possible. One, provide free Ride On bus
17 services which would provide more mobility and cost less
18 than 10 percent of the cost of the proposed BRT lines. The
19 cost last year would have been \$22 million. Next year it
20 would probably be \$23 million. This is the amount of fare
21 contribution made by Ride On riders.

22 Let WMATA provide express bus services on Veirs
23 Mill Road and US 29 at no direct cost to the County since
24 the WMATA is starting these enhanced express bus services by
25 June of 2016. This is both a more affordable and more

1 immediate solution rather than waiting five to 10 years that
2 the BRT requires. Also implement 355 Ride On plus transit
3 services on MD 355 at a cost of \$21 million. It will be \$17
4 million that is not provided by the Tiger grant. If you get
5 that, it's only \$4 million.

6 We do not understand where the ridership
7 projections come from. Currently WMATA red line serves
8 10,492 riders between Bethesda and Chevy Chase each weekday.
9 Ride On serves, 46 serves 3,415, and the Ride On 55 serves
10 7,650. We don't see where you're going to get the 60,000
11 riders. Maybe, maybe someone can do good arithmetic. I'm a
12 CPA. I can't figure it out. Thank you.

13 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Garson. Next --

14 MR. ZEPP: Excuse me, Mr. Chair. I'd like to ask
15 a question.

16 MR. WINSTON: Yes, sir.

17 MR. ZEPP: At the June 17th Task Force Public
18 Meeting, the County Executive said that he did not and would
19 not support a system costing \$1.8 billion. The numbers
20 you're citing exceed that amount. How certain are you of
21 those figures?

22 MR. GARSON: Well, I'm certain that they're
23 incorrect because they've been provided by PFM of \$2.2
24 million. And this incurs the, I'll call it three or four
25 BRT routes. If we separate 355 into two routes, it's two

1 routes. Then you add US 29 and Veirs Mill plus Corridor
2 City's Transit Phase 1. This is what the consultants
3 provided for. We know that the County is very accurate in
4 estimating cost. We've seen at, our Transportation Center
5 was just completed well under budget in Silver Spring.
6 Well, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe it was over budget an extra
7 number of years. But they can't even get a transit center
8 built. We actually look at the costs and we get the project
9 cost at \$2,297,000. But they actually grow to \$5.7 billion
10 if you look at the aggregate debt service. They don't break
11 down principal and interest of \$2,993,000,000. County Pay-
12 Go which the taxpayers have to pay of \$363,000,000. Their
13 operating and maintenance expenses net a fare box of
14 \$1,989,000,000. Their capital reserve requirement of \$229
15 million. Their O&M reserve deposit requirement of \$36
16 million. And the net addition is a sinking fund of \$150
17 million. I, I think these figures are understated because
18 they seem to miss buying new buses. Because most buses
19 won't last for 30 years. Maybe these super-duper buses at a
20 million dollars will last for 30 years, but I can't see how
21 they're going last for 30 years. They also showed no
22 administrative costs in the first five years of operation.
23 When you are going to have a board of directors? You're
24 going to have all kinds of people assigned and all kinds of
25 supervision of the current Ride On service. And none of

1 those expenses seem to be shown in. If anything, it's
2 probably well over \$6, maybe even \$7 billion it'll actually
3 cost us. And we see currently that Ride On can't even
4 maintain their current service. They've just proposed
5 eliminating the 42, which is listed in the CAC reports as a
6 feeder service onto Rockville Pike. So they're eliminating
7 the feeder services if they, use this 10 riders per trip
8 thing. We're going to lose 22 of the 78 Ride On buses. I
9 don't see how the system is going to have any ridership by
10 the time it's built.

11 MR. ZEPP: Thank you.

12 MR. WINSTON: Ms. Bienenfeld.

13 MS. BIENENFELD: Thank you. I'm president of the
14 Montgomery Civic Federation and I'm honored to represent
15 over 150,000 residents throughout Montgomery County. All of
16 our members live in Montgomery County and we all vote. And
17 I'd like to ask you as I usually do how many of you took
18 public transit to get to this meeting? Thank you, Delegate
19 Korman. Good job.

20 MR. KORMAN: And I was on time.

21 MS. BIENENFELD: Yes. It went very well today.

22 So, just for the record, the Rockville stop is
23 very close to here. Just a few blocks. And as I said, all
24 our members live in Montgomery County. I assume everybody
25 on the Transit Task Force lives in the County too? Is that

1 correct?

2 MR. WINSTON: Of course it does.

3 MS. BIENENFELD: It is? No --

4 MR. WINSTON: That's except for, I think, Mr.
5 Genn, who lives in Baltimore.

6 MS. BIENENFELD: Mr. Genn lives not in Montgomery
7 County?

8 MR. GENN: That's correct.

9 MS. BIENENFELD: Oh.

10 MR. WINSTON: We're not here to respond to
11 questions. We're here to listen to your testimony. Why
12 don't you --

13 MS. BIENENFELD: Well, you are here to respond
14 questions because --

15 MR. WINSTON: Why don't you deliver your
16 testimony?

17 MS. BIENENFELD: I'm happy to deliver my
18 testimony. And I believe you could answer questions
19 actually. We're the residents and we're paying the
20 salaries.

21 MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Well --

22 MS. BIENENFELD: This is the third time you
23 requested a --

24 MR. KORMAN: We don't earn a salary.

25 MS. BIENENFELD: No salaries, but the salary of

1 Mr. Leggett. We're paying for the electricity here. The
2 computers and --

3 MR. WINSTON: Again, why don't you just give your
4 testimony? We're trying to have a meeting at which we
5 listen to your testimony.

6 MS. BIENENFELD: Fine.

7 MR. WINSTON: We're not here to respond to the
8 statements that you're making. We're not going to get into
9 a back and forth that way. We'd like you to present --

10 MS. BIENENFELD: You don't have to. We can go to
11 our elected representatives and we'll have a back and forth
12 with them.

13 MR. WINSTON: Good.

14 MS. BIENENFELD: Bottom line, we don't want an
15 independent transit authority and we do not want a bus rapid
16 transit system. We do want fiscally conservative
17 responsible approaches to the issues of failing traffic
18 intersections, increasing dangers to pedestrians and
19 bicyclists and lack of public transit where it is needed.
20 We, the Civic Fed are in the process of compiling results
21 from a questionnaire we sent to our members regarding the
22 ITA and the BRT. So far, over 50 percent of our member
23 organizations have responded. Here are the results to date.

24 Ninety-six percent of respondents' neighborhoods
25 are within one-half mile of Ride On transit. Ninety-two

1 percent of respondents said they do not support creating an
2 independent transit authority for Montgomery County.
3 Ninety-two percent do not support breaking the charter. The
4 Civic Fed has carefully studied these issues, as you know,
5 as led by Mr. Garson, who just testified.

6 What we want is additional publicly funded
7 transit. We recommend in keeping with the 21st century
8 technology, knowledge and realistic population and ridership
9 requirements any new public transits must keep to the
10 important principal of flexibility. That is, a diesel bus
11 fixed route system is not acceptable in the 21st century
12 given changed cultural expectations and available
13 technologies. We refer to V2V (phonetic sp.) technologies,
14 autonomous vehicles, including transit, transportation
15 flexibility apps and the like. This is the ecosystem, the
16 one we're entering now. And I don't think I need to go into
17 what we've learned about clean diesel in the last few weeks.

18 To my fellow residents I want to make sure you're
19 all aware that DOT has already done a real estate evaluation
20 of properties along the proposed routes in advance of a
21 quick take of property to extend the road bed to the full
22 width of the right-of-way. In some areas, the right-of-way
23 will be extended. I would urge you to contact DOT to find
24 out where your property stands regarding the quick take.
25 We've seen in my own neighborhood that there are streets and

1 neighbors who are going to be, have been assessed. Thank
2 you.

3 MR. WINSTON: Thank you. Carole -- yes?

4 MR. SIMONEAU: I'm sorry. Go ahead. Go ahead.

5 MR. WINSTON: My next, the next person on the list
6 is Carole Barth.

7 MS. BARTH: Good evening. I wanted to write
8 testimony cataloging the many capital costs the Task Force
9 excluded in order to keep construction costs down to \$2.5
10 billion. The ludicrously optimistic projections of benefits
11 which were never subjected to any independent expert
12 analysis and the complete lack of performance metrics
13 through the BRT and ITA. But why bother? I already know
14 you don't care about any of that stuff. So let me tell you
15 a story instead.

16 Once upon a time not so long ago in a land not so
17 far away, the people were sad because they had inefficient
18 and unreliable transit, unmaintained roads and antiquated
19 traffic signals. Now the rulers of this land had squeezed
20 all the taxes they could from the people and borrowed as
21 much money as they could. Where should we find new tax
22 revenues, they cried? We know, said some piggies. We'll
23 build magical mixed used palaces and jobs will become
24 plentiful in the land. Yay. Even white table cloth
25 restaurants will we build. But these were greedy piggies

1 and they said we'll build the palaces and gain all the
2 profit, but the people and the small businesses must pay for
3 all the needed infrastructure. We must convince the people
4 they have no choice.

5 Some sleek weasels who were feasting on crumbs
6 from the piggies' table said we can fool the people for you.
7 So the piggies and weasels told the people they must build a
8 world class gold standard transformative system of giant
9 oxcarts or there would be no new jobs or white table
10 restaurants in all the land. And the rulers said this seems
11 good to us, but alas, we have maxed out our credit cards.
12 So the piggies and weasels hatched a scheme to indenture the
13 people for 30 years to a cabal of unelected evil wizards.
14 Everything seemed to be going the piggies' way. But the
15 people said this is taxation without representation. We
16 don't want transformative oxcarts. We want to invest in the
17 future of transportation. We want affordable, efficient and
18 reliable transit on repaved roads. We want real time
19 adaptive traffic signals and free local bus service. You
20 can't have that, said the piggies. So the people had a
21 piggy roast and lived happily ever after.

22 Oh, yeah.

23 MR. WINSTON: Thank you very much.

24 MR. SIMONEAU: Mr. Chairman?

25 MR. WINSTON: Yes.

1 MR. SIMONEAU: On that happy note, could I just
2 ask a quick question of the panel. Those of you from the
3 Civic Fed, I understand some of the objections you've raised
4 about the lack of data on much of this BRT system. And
5 actually, to Mr. Harris, too. I don't mean to exclude you.
6 Your background as a COG planner, I'd be interested in your
7 response to this. One part of Phase 1 of this BRT system,
8 as you probably know, is this Corridor City's Transit Way,
9 CCT, which has been through about 20 years of extensive
10 analysis and actually has been shown to be cost competitive
11 and has had to compete against other projects around the
12 country actually for cost effectiveness. When you say you
13 don't support a BRT network, are you including the CCT in
14 that or are you just talking about the rest of Phase 1? I
15 just want clarification.

16 MR. GARSON: Well, I, I haven't studied CCT
17 properly. It looks like it was fairly well planned out in
18 that. Since I live closest to 355, I do occasionally ride
19 on 29, I've actually made it a practice in the last couple
20 of weeks of whenever I'm going anywhere to actually ride on
21 Veirs Mill Road. And I see Veirs Mill having a quantity of
22 buses. The express bus service that WMATA has proposed
23 would definitely work. On 29 they proposed an express bus
24 service and this meets all the definitions of the Planning
25 Board because the K-9 that WMATA does is the same type of

1 thing and they call it a BRT-commuter service in the Master
2 Plan. I haven't, there doesn't seem to be any alternative
3 for CCT that's been proposed. So I haven't really studied
4 it, but of the other three routes, it just makes no sense to
5 me. I mean if we're going to lose a lane of traffic on 355,
6 it's really going to affect businesses. If your goal is to
7 destroy businesses in Montgomery County, get rid of one lane
8 on 355 and I guarantee you your two-year construction plan
9 will probably definitely be completed on time. And if it's
10 not on time, well, we'll lose even more businesses. I mean
11 look at, look at things that can be done fast. There
12 doesn't seem to be any alternative proposal from CCT at the
13 moment.

14 If the County or the Department of Transportation
15 comes up with an innovative thing, such as the 355 Ride On
16 Plus system, which would be an express bus service. They've
17 applied for a Tiger grant. I hope they get the Tiger grant
18 because that'll save us \$17 million. And if we can't get it
19 for \$21 million without destroying Rockville Pike, I'd
20 rather see that. Thank you.

21 MR. SIMONEAU: Okay. Thank you.

22 MR. KORMAN: I haven't studied the CCT, but I can
23 say that at least definitively on the route that I'm
24 discussing, the route 29 South route, we literally have no
25 data. Like we, I wasn't kidding. I've been in --

1 MR. SIMONEAU: Right. But there is data for the
2 CCT and this is pretty --

3 MR. KORMAN: Fine. But for five months --

4 MR. SIMONEAU: -- pretty worked on.

5 MR. KORMAN: -- I've been in meetings and it seems
6 like there is a solution which is the BRT. We know there's
7 a problem.

8 MR. SIMONEAU: Right.

9 MR. KORMAN: And we have a solution. What we
10 don't have is the rationale for it. These are extremely
11 complicated systems. I spent part of the summer in Bogota,
12 Colombia, which is where the Transmilenio was built, which
13 is the model upon which almost all BRT systems were built.
14 And there it is one of the worst traffic cities in the
15 world. They not only have the Transmilenio, but they also
16 have a system where you can only drive on even or odd days
17 according to your license plates. So even though they have
18 the silver bullet, they are still a disaster in terms of
19 traffic. So it is highly complicated. I don't understand
20 honestly how this Task Force came out with the positive
21 recommendations when I'm sitting on the Advisory Committee
22 and I don't even have traffic data for who is traveling on
23 29 South.

24 MR. SIMONEAU: Well, you're not the only one who
25 has asked that question.

1 MR. KORMAN: So that's what's frustrating. It
2 almost seems like the Advisory Committee process is a bit of
3 a farce if you've already made your recommendations without
4 having data. I just, I'm a business person, a planner. I
5 make data driven decisions and I would hope that the County
6 would as well. Thanks.

7 MR. WINSTON: All right. Thank you to, to this
8 panel. I'm going to play catch-up for a moment. I see Tina
9 Slater is here. And I think I saw Ilaya Hopkins as well.
10 Would you both please come to the table to offer your, your
11 statement?

12 MS. HOPKINS: Thank you.

13 MR. WINSTON: Thank you. Ms. Slater.

14 MS. SLATER: Thank you very much, Mr. Winston.
15 I'm Tina Slater. I live in Silver Spring and I'd like to
16 quote something that was said back in 2012 that still holds
17 true or perhaps truer today. A rapid transit network is
18 perhaps the single most practical and cost effective
19 alternative in solving our significant transportation
20 capacity problems and relieving not only the current but
21 future congestion. Gridlock is rampant. It's hurting our
22 economy, our safety, and our quality of life. That is why
23 we need to invest in alternative transportation on the scale
24 that will really make a difference to our residents and
25 employers.

1 This is a quote from Ike Leggett: "Whether to
2 spend funds on roadway expansion or to spend it on building
3 BRT is at its core a question of whether we should
4 prioritize moving cars or moving people. The average car is
5 15 feet long. The average BRT vehicle is 83 feet long.
6 What this means is you can fit six cars in the same length
7 of space as a single BRT vehicle. With six cars you are
8 likely moving only six people. With one BRT vehicle you can
9 move anywhere from 80 to 120 people. Yes, we do have bus
10 transit service today, but the buses are stuck in the same
11 lanes as cars and often stop at every block. These slow
12 speeds and infrequent arrival time do not make this kind of
13 bus service very appealing to riders who have an
14 alternative."

15 Effective BRT requires giving buses street space
16 so they can operate in their own exclusive lanes. Effective
17 BRT requires frequent arrival of buses. When we focus
18 solely on the needs of drivers, we risk forgetting other
19 residents of our county who do not own or drive cars. These
20 are people who cannot drive because of age, youth,
21 infirmity, disabilities or economic situation. By
22 continuing to focus on services for drivers, we are
23 neglecting a large portion of our County's population. The
24 key goals of our public policy should be to serve the most
25 people fairly. Just as we ask the greater population to

1 fund public schools, even if they do not have children or
2 even if their children are grown and no longer attend these
3 schools, we too must fund public transportation for all our
4 residents. Passing the independent transit authority
5 legislation is the way to move expeditiously on these goals.
6 Thank you.

7 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Ms. Slater. Ms. Hopkins.

8 MR. HOPKINS: Thank you. I apologize for being
9 late. I was at another meeting. I am also grateful for the
10 opportunity to serve on the Transit Task Force. The
11 Montgomery County Chamber is here to help our members be
12 successful because a robust and vibrant local economy
13 produces revenues that benefit the entire community. And we
14 have a long history of advocating on behalf of
15 infrastructure investment in all kinds of modes of
16 transportation.

17 Given the length of our evening tonight as Task
18 Force members and all people who want to speak, I'm just
19 going to cut to the chase. We testified in January. We
20 also were at the hearing in June and our testimony remains
21 much the same. But it is important to remember what has
22 changed in the last year. The decision on the Winn case has
23 a huge impact on Montgomery County and its revenues. And
24 the decision on the purple line is also impacting
25 allocations of resources in Montgomery County. And we also

1 know that an additional property tax is being discussed. So
2 we really are beginning to believe that we recommend the
3 next step, the County provide additional details as to which
4 specific transit projects in, in the RTS system would get
5 priority funding based on economic and transportation needs
6 and we encourage the County Executive to revisit the
7 assumptions behind the creation of the ITA and find
8 alternatives to fund these needed transportation priorities.

9 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Ms. Hopkins. I'd like to
10 call the next panel to the table. Next panel is Jeremy
11 Martin, Gretchen Goldman, Harold McDougall, Jean Cavanaugh,
12 and Peter Tomao.

13 Good evening. Welcome to the public forum. Mr.
14 Martin.

15 MR. MARTIN: Yes. Thank you. My name is Jeremy
16 Martin. I live in Rockville. Thanks for the opportunity to
17 testify in support of bus rapid transit system and in
18 particular, in support of getting started building it
19 expeditiously.

20 I live in Rockville with my family and I get
21 around by car, by bike, by train and by bus. I serve my
22 community as a member of the Rockville Traffic and
23 Transportation Commission and the Pedestrian Safety Task
24 Force. And I represent the Maryland Municipal League on the
25 Montgomery County Pedestrian/Bicycle Traffic Safety Advisory

1 Committee. I'm also the Maryland Co-Chair of the Citizens
2 Advisory Committee to the Transportation Planning Board.

3 My personal experience in public service make it
4 clear to me how important a first class transit system is to
5 the economic vitality and quality of life of our community.
6 Successful development in the region is clustering around
7 transit and building a world-class transit infrastructure
8 will be essential to draw the kinds of development we want
9 in a very competitive environment. My parents are thinking
10 of moving to the region and they're looking for a less car
11 dependent community as they age. Building a first class BRT
12 down the Rockville Pike will make the community more
13 attractive to them and they, in turn, will make it more
14 profitable for local businesses.

15 The Transit Task Force draft proposal makes a
16 strong case for a new BRT and for the role of an independent
17 transit authority to build it. I encourage County leaders
18 to examine this idea carefully.

19 Every day I bike to the Rockville Metro Station on
20 route to my job in D.C. A couple of weeks ago I spent some
21 time talking to people at the bus stop, at the bus stops
22 there about the BRT. I spoke with lots of different people
23 using the bus for different purposes. They all recognized
24 the importance of efficient, reliable and rapid transit for
25 their daily lives. Building dedicated lanes on the most

1 important routes will insure the bus is an attractive option
2 rather than a last resort. And this is what will develop,
3 will drive ridership and reduce traffic as residents of the
4 County have more transportation choices. My experience on
5 the Rockville Traffic Commission shows there is not much
6 more we can do to push more cars down the Rockville Pike.
7 We need to invest in attractive, efficient options,
8 including a BRT. Building a BRT will improve conditions for
9 transit riders, but also for drivers as transit riders take
10 cars off the road. And, of course, local merchants and
11 restaurants will benefit as well.

12 A first class transit system needs station
13 platforms level with the bus to make the system efficient
14 and accessible. This accessibility is especially important
15 to me because my daughter is in a wheelchair. Every day a
16 bus from the County school blocks the traffic on my street
17 as it lowers to lift up her chair and put her on the bus.
18 I'm very grateful for this service, but as I look to the
19 future, I'd like to see a system that allows people in
20 wheelchairs to just roll right on to the bus. And, and
21 building this kind of system will avoid the expense of
22 deploying special buses with lifts and other accommodations
23 that are awkward for the people using them and slow down the
24 efficient operation of the system. As people waiting on my
25 street can attest.

1 So I urge you to move forward expeditiously. It's
2 an investment that will make the County work for me, make it
3 more accessible for elderly people, people with disabilities
4 and make it a vibrant community that my children will want
5 to call home 15 or 50 years in the future. Thanks.

6 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Martin. Ms. Goldman.

7 MS. GOLDMAN: Thank you. My name is Gretchen
8 Goldman. I'm a resident of Takoma Park. And I also serve
9 as the Vice Chair on the Air and Climate Public Advisory
10 Committee for COG.

11 I do not have a car myself. I live in a one car
12 family. And I haven't driven a car significantly since high
13 school, more than 15 years ago. And I want to make that
14 point because I am not unique in this setting. People my
15 age and younger have continuously and consistently now made
16 that choice to not have, to not drive. To live in places
17 where they don't need to drive, to take transit and to try
18 to live in more dense communities. We see that even right
19 out here. All of the apartment buildings I walked by on my
20 way from the train station were advertising downtown living,
21 accessible living, vibrant communities. This is the future.
22 So I think that, I wanted to make this point that for
23 economic viability for Montgomery County, this is the kind
24 of thing that we need. And bus rapid transit can really
25 help us get there. I think any costs that are outlined in

1 the proposal need to be weighed against these benefits. Not
2 only as they are quantified now, but the way that they will
3 be in the future as my generation looks for, looks to move
4 to places like Montgomery County that have good school
5 systems and want that style of life. I think if we miss out
6 on building bus rapid transit and other proposals now,
7 we're, Montgomery County is going to miss out on collecting
8 that economic advantage of having those people in this area.

9 But I also want to focus on not just people like
10 myself who do this by choice, but the many people that do
11 this, that don't have a choice. This includes, as we've
12 heard, people who economically cannot afford a car, those
13 who are old, those who are young, those who are disabled.
14 And this is a population that I think we're not reaching
15 very much in this meeting. We see this, I, I took public
16 transit here, but I think for many people this isn't the
17 most accessible location and time for a public meeting. And
18 so, I think we should consider that one as you hear the
19 comments tonight and who they come from. And the Montgomery
20 County that I know is diverse and is embracing of that
21 diversity. And I think that we need to consider that and
22 any, and, and those populations that don't have an
23 opportunity to be here tonight.

24 So many will make, talk about the details of the
25 plan and use them as excuses to not move forward, but I

1 think the bottom line is that we need this and we need it
2 now. As a resident of Montgomery County and as an expectant
3 mother, I want this for myself, for my family and for our
4 community. Thank you.

5 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Ms. Goldman. Mr.
6 McDougall.

7 MR. McDOUGALL: Okay. I'm Harold McDougall. I'm
8 a law professor at Howard University. I specialize in land
9 use planning and development. I'm also one, my family is
10 one of approximately 24 minority and immigrant families that
11 live on US 29 directly in the path of the BRT that would
12 come down. So we're very concerned about the loss of our
13 homes. We're particularly concerned about the possibility
14 of losing our homes in a process that would not involve,
15 that would not allow us to, to fully represent our views
16 from a, an ITA that would be basically unaccountable to the
17 public.

18 I'm not going to give you a lot of details. You
19 know, people have already talked about how this, the aim of
20 this system could be achieved by, you know, free Ride On
21 service and express buses. I think a lot of this
22 information is very densely packed. You know, people are
23 trying to make their points in three minutes. I do know
24 there was an exchange where, where, I guess, you know, the
25 chairman said that, you know, you guys weren't here to

1 respond to questions. You're just supposed to, you know,
2 kind of listen to us and we listened, we talked to you in
3 three minute sound bites. But, you know, you have your
4 experts and, and my guess is that BRT really is a, an idea
5 that comes from a discussion that took place involving a
6 very small number of people. There are, you know, there are
7 couple of Rockefeller funded, you know, advocacy groups.
8 There are developers and, you know, the broad base of the
9 population, particularly the people that, that, you know,
10 folks that have been talking about the diverse population.
11 I ride the buses a lot. I look like the people who ride the
12 buses. They don't notice me as being any different. And
13 most of the folks that I know who ride the buses, they were
14 happy to just have the bus come and they stay on it.

15 One of the things about BRT is that because it is
16 a, a limited number of stops, if you are a minority person
17 or an immigrant or a low income person who doesn't live
18 right on one of those routes, you have to take several buses
19 to get to the BRT. And I'm telling you folks are not going
20 to do that. They're happy to get on the bus. They're
21 already tired. They're happy to get on the bus and just
22 ride it, you know, and take it to their destination.
23 They're not really going to get on and off three and four
24 buses to get someplace. But again, I talked about how the
25 conversation has really involved only a small number of

1 people. And it's really very kind of disheartening because
2 a lot of us came to Montgomery County because we perceived
3 it to be a county, a community that was really engaged in
4 participatory democracy. Really listening to the
5 population. Listening to people. Not just having these
6 kind of lead conversations that you then result in something
7 that's imposed on people. And, you know, a lot of us are
8 getting calls from Chris Van Hollen and people like that who
9 are running for office. The County Council people and Ike
10 who are not running for office right now have the luxury of
11 not listening to us. But the people who are running for
12 office, they, they're asking for our support. And you know,
13 we're tired. We're just depressed. You know. I mean the
14 democracy, what passes for democracy in this country is
15 looking more, in this County, is looking more and more like
16 there's big shots on one side and there's little people on
17 the other. That's how it feels to us. And we're not really
18 very interested in participating. So when they come around,
19 you know, looking for our votes, I said to them the last
20 time, you know, people are not going to vote Republican.
21 They're just not going to vote at all. And that's really,
22 when you talk about infrastructure, think about civic
23 infrastructure. Think about cultural and community
24 infrastructure of this County, not just what you can build.
25 It's also about the relationships between people. And think

1 about the ways in which you might be undermining that by
2 doing this without really asking us and just kind of rolling
3 on ahead. Thank you.

4 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. McDougall. Ms.
5 Cavanaugh.

6 MS. CAVANAUGH: Yes. Thank you. My name is Jean
7 Cavanaugh. I live in Silver Spring. Before I start, I
8 think, I just want to recognize those of you who attended
9 the Transit Task Force Working Sessions through the summer.
10 Week after week. Sometimes twice a week and made the huge
11 effort to wade through a lot more data than I had to wade
12 through and put together the, your report. Even if I don't
13 agree with it. So I just want to make that recognition.

14 So I am testifying as an individual in opposition
15 to the proposed legislation to create an independent transit
16 authority. And I'd like to urge the County to take
17 affordable and incremental steps to improve transit options
18 which we desperately need within the available budget and
19 current taxing authorities. I'd like to quote my neighbor
20 and friend who you, somebody else already quoted him,
21 Jonathan Halpern. He couldn't get a seat at the table today
22 and he's an expert in transportation infrastructure and P-3
23 and all of that. He says, to paraphrase, most
24 transportation authorities that exist play a coordination in
25 policy planning role and do not have taxation authority.

1 However, the proposed ITA seems to be primarily about
2 mobilizing debt financing to implement a single transit mode
3 and what appears to be a policy vacuum. And to provide
4 fiscal space for the County to undertake several mega
5 projects at once. The County's own, so that's, I'm finished
6 with Jonathan's quote.

7 The County's own consultant Institute For
8 Transportation And Development Policy says developing even
9 one BRT corridor will be an administrative challenge in
10 Montgomery County. Let alone an attempt to develop and
11 deliver multiple corridors simultaneously. A task no other
12 municipality has ever attempted. As a taxpayer, my concern
13 is the rapidly rising tax burden and school priorities and
14 other priorities that other people have already discussed.
15 The County also faces unknown costs to pay for the purple
16 line, a project that will require over \$120 million in
17 annual payments to a concessionaire. Although the purple
18 line is supposed to be a State project, we don't know where
19 the availability payments will come from and whether
20 Montgomery County's State transportation dollars will be
21 diverted to pay for the purple line.

22 Montgomery County enjoys its triple AAA bond rating
23 in part because of the fiscal discipline imposed by the
24 charter limit on property taxes. Something that was voted
25 on by the people of Montgomery County. I believe what the

1 Task Force and the County Executive recommend violates the
2 trust taxpayers have in our elected officials to be good
3 stewards of our funds. Any ITA debt which from the
4 calculations in your report looks to be in the billions and
5 billions of dollars will count against our debt ceiling and
6 the taxpayers will ultimately be held liable for that debt.

7 I'd like to just, a last word. I understand that
8 not everybody on the Task Force agrees with the, with the
9 draft report so I would like to see a minority report come
10 out of this Task Force. Thank you.

11 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Ms. Cavanaugh. Mr.
12 Tomao.

13 MR. TOMAO: Hi. I am Pete Tomao, the Montgomery
14 County Advocacy manager for the Coalition for Smarter
15 Growth. CSG is the leading organization in the Washington,
16 D.C. region dedicated to making the case for smart growth.
17 With over 3,000 supporters in Montgomery County and over
18 22,000 region-wide.

19 By 2040, Montgomery County will have 20 percent
20 more people, 40 percent more jobs, and 70 percent more
21 congestion. As the Transit Task Force report makes clear,
22 without a BRT system, Montgomery County cannot remain
23 economically competitive. The CEO of Marriott created a
24 stir when he stated unequivocally that their next
25 headquarters must be Metro accessible. Attracting top

1 professional talent means creating transit friendly
2 environments. The market for transit oriented development
3 in Montgomery is booming. According to a June 2015 report,
4 the most successful office clusters in the County are
5 located in transit accessible and walkable environments.
6 Metropolitan areas ranking high for walkable places at a 38
7 percent higher GDP per capita than those ranking low.

8 Development in areas like White Flint and the 355
9 North corridor depend upon the success of bus rapid transit.
10 Additionally, driving is down and transit use is up. The
11 County's own mobility assessment report found that while the
12 population increased by 100,000 people since 2002, driving
13 in Montgomery County did not. Commuters making the decision
14 to take a train or a bus instead of a car save more than
15 \$10,000 per year on average, according to the American
16 Public Transportation Association. A BRT system can take
17 advantage of the shifting preferences and provide
18 transportation options for all income levels. The Task
19 Force draft proposal builds a strong case for the role an
20 ITA can play in building our BRT system sooner. An ITA
21 allows a new transit system to yield efficiently by an
22 agency whose sole focus is creating a successful system.
23 The ITA also insures a future system has a dedicated funding
24 source and taxpayers can know where their money is going.
25 We urge the County Council and County Executive Leggett to

1 carefully consider the creation of an ITA.

2 In recent weeks we have been talking to residents
3 and transit riders. I personally have spoken to dozens of
4 citizens from working mothers commuting up and down the
5 Route 29 corridor to young professionals going from Silver
6 Spring to Bethesda. They all say the same thing. We want a
7 BRT system. We have collected over 500 signatures on a
8 petition thus far in support of the BRT. The Transit Task
9 Force report is a strong starting point for making the BRT
10 system a reality. Montgomery County has a history of
11 leading the way on progressive issues from its renowned MPDU
12 program to the Agricultural Reserve. The time is now to
13 make transit investments. The longer we wait, the more
14 expensive increasing transit options will become. We ask
15 that policymakers remember this history and insure that we
16 build the BRT system. Thank you for your time.

17 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Tomao.

18 MR. TOMAO: Thank you.

19 MR. WINSTON: That, that is the end of this
20 panel's statements and thank you very much. I'd like to
21 call the next panel to, to the table. Katheryne Chiariello,
22 Paul Seder, Richard Levine, Larry Dickter, and Barbara
23 Ditzler.

24 Welcome to all of you. Ms. Chiariello, please.

25 MS. CHIARIELLO: I thank you for allowing me to

1 speak tonight. My name is Katheryne Chiariello and I was
2 born and raised here in Montgomery County.

3 MR. LEVINE: Are we, the mic is on correctly?

4 MS. CHIARIELLO: Okay. Thank you.

5 MR. WINSTON: If everyone, if everyone else could
6 turn off their mics, that's usually the way --

7 MS. CHIARIELLO: Sorry.

8 MR. WINSTON: Okay.

9 MS. CHIARIELLO: Thank you for letting me speak
10 tonight. My name is Katheryne Chiariello and I was born and
11 raised here in Montgomery County about three blocks from
12 Veirs Mill Road and I currently live about three blocks from
13 355. So I know firsthand how these two corridors are
14 traffic ridden, pedestrian friendly and generally lacking
15 alternatives to single car travel.

16 I believe Montgomery County needs BRT along these
17 routes and elsewhere. We need a robust BRT system as soon
18 as possible with features like dedicated lanes, off board
19 fare paying, adequate bike and pedestrian facilities, and
20 perhaps most importantly, frequent, reliable service.
21 Together with better pedestrian and bicycle planning, BRT
22 can help keep the County a vibrant and attractive place to
23 live, work or invest. I think everyone here recognizes that
24 it's going to be expensive to build a true BRT system.
25 However, the opportunity costs of not building or investing

1 in this infrastructure are even higher. We need a BRT
2 system so that Montgomery County can remain economically
3 competitive within the changing and growing metropolitan
4 region. A BRT system can help attract and retain the
5 employers and residents that build our communities and our
6 tax base. The Transit Task Force draft proposal shows how
7 an independent transit authority could help build and
8 finance a BRT system fully and efficiently and could insure
9 a dedicated funding source for transit. People have talked
10 a lot about WMATA and Metro's failures lately and today and
11 part of that failure comes from not having such a dedicated
12 funding source.

13 BRT provides an alternative to all of us who would
14 prefer not to drive, who would rather read and relax on our
15 commutes than to get stressed out by someone cutting us off
16 in traffic. It is an alternative for those of who us who
17 can't drive because of the cost of car ownership or because
18 of age or mental or physical disabilities. The question
19 before us is not one of car drivers versus bus riders.
20 Chances are most of us have been or will be both car users
21 and transit users at some point in our lives or sometimes
22 both within a single day. BRT can serve all of us. From
23 someone like my nephew who is old enough to ride the bus
24 alone, but too young to drive, to my parents who could more
25 easily age in place in that same house near Veirs Mill Road

1 if there was a transit station around the corner. It can
2 serve any of us who for whatever our personal, economic,
3 environmental or lifestyle reasons would choose BRT if it
4 was available and functioning as we know it can.

5 The proposed BRT system can help connect our
6 communities, preserve our environment and grow our economy.
7 I hope policymakers commit to this investment and to the
8 future of our County and build BRT now. Thank you.

9 MR. WINSTON: Thank you. Mr. Seder.

10 MR. SEDER: Yes. I'm Paul Seder. Excuse me. And
11 I've been involved for 25 years in the research and studies
12 and testimony and articles, including in The Washington Post
13 on transit and related topics. BRT implementation needs to
14 be gradual in order to adapt to many major factors that will
15 diminish future BRT demand. One of them is changes in
16 Federal employment. In the coming years, we will see growth
17 in Social Security and medically related transfer payments
18 to baby boomers, et cetera. These are not generally run in
19 Montgomery County. They're out of the Social Security
20 Administration in Baltimore. In order to pay for these,
21 there will be, regardless of party, there will be cutbacks
22 in other Federal spending. That will affect Montgomery
23 County and will reduce money and employment.

24 Second, there is decreased travel due to a number
25 of technologically related finding, happenings. One is

1 telework. Another is substitution for store purchasing.
2 Another is Uber related services instead of owning a car or
3 a second car. Another is online shopping, grocery shopping
4 and delivery. Another is online home entertainment.

5 Three, in some corridors, and I, I live just off
6 355 South and I was head of planning at NIH. I participated
7 in Walter Reed's strategic plan. And I've taken thousands
8 of trips along this corridor. There are special impediments
9 to BRT use in this corridor. Walter Reed has an annual
10 estimated one million patient visits. Most of these occur
11 in non-rush hour and by car. Why by car? Because many of
12 these people are bringing one or more companions, school age
13 children, handicapped and so on. And they are not, these
14 are not likely candidates for switching to BRT. And there's
15 ample parking at Walter Reed. In addition, 355 overlaps
16 with the Metro rail. Now, potentially, Metro rail riders
17 might switch to the BRT, but it may, I think it's more
18 possible that, that a lot of them will just be locked in and
19 be used to the BRT. So gradual implementation would mean,
20 you know, right here on 355, would mean the right-hand lane
21 going south or north, just one lane, not concreted off, but
22 designated by signs and then based on experience with that,
23 then changes could be made in future years or the money
24 could be allocated to feeder buses, which might be found to
25 be the need. But it needs to be gradual. Thank you.

1 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Seder. Mr. Levine.
2 Mr. Levine.

3 MR. LEVINE: Chair Winston and members of the Task
4 Force, I'm Richard Levine, president of the Locust Hill
5 Citizens Association. We're a community of single family
6 households on the east side of Rockville Pike inside the
7 beltway. We note the Task Force's recommendations to
8 increase oversight of the ITA's budget and procurement
9 activities and set limits on the tax rates the ITA may
10 adopt. These are steps in the right direction, but we
11 continue to oppose legislation to establish a multi-member
12 authority outside the Executive branch. Most fundamentally,
13 the Task Force assumes that ITA legislation is needed to
14 begin the financing in the near term of a BRT system that
15 costs well over a billion dollars and right-of-way
16 improvements before any alternative analyses have been
17 undertaken. The recommendations that thus admit a process
18 to insure the nature and timing of major transit
19 expenditures among all modes incorporate the most cost
20 beneficial and least intrusive solutions.

21 As president of a citizens association, I can
22 assure that as reluctant and residents are to support tax
23 increases, there is no support whatever for passage in the
24 next General Assembly of legislation authorizing an
25 independent transit agency prior to completion of

1 alternatives analysis of the best use of any new tax
2 dollars. As a member of the 355 South Advisory Committee, I
3 note that no cost benefit mechanism exists to evaluate
4 overall BRT route prioritization and construction timing.
5 Moreover, the current BRT study process uses forecasts of
6 essentially unknowable conditions in 2040 that do not appear
7 to take into account changing patterns in the location of
8 new job growth in the County, clearly emerging trends in
9 telecommuting, vehicle sharing and intelligent vehicle and
10 highway design. Forecasts that may have been within the
11 bounds of reason when made just two years ago may thus be
12 implausible based on what we know today. Consequently, no
13 proposals for new transit taxes should be considered until a
14 process is in place systematically to choose among possible
15 transportation projects to provide an opportunity to
16 consider updated transit and demand information and other
17 such considerations to make sure that tax supported debt
18 service does not crowd out transportation spending that
19 would have greater benefits per dollar spent.

20 Smart growth starts with smart transit. A rush to
21 establish an ITA whose key purpose is to raise taxes to
22 support long-term bonds to finance BRT without any analysis
23 of the benefits for competing use of transit debt tax
24 dollars doesn't seem very smart to the residents of Locust
25 Hill. Thank you very much for consideration of our views.

1 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Levine. Mr. Dickter.

2 MR. DICKTER: Good evening. My name is Larry
3 Dickter and I am a 25 year resident of Silver Spring where I
4 serve as Vice President of the South Four Corners Citizens
5 Association, which represents over 3,000 residents.

6 It should be apparent by now after two lengthy
7 public hearings earlier this year and I'm sure by the time
8 we're done here tonight that there is little, if any, public
9 support for creating an ITA or any new bureaucracy that will
10 make it easier for the County to override the voter approved
11 charter limit on property taxes or costing the taxpayers
12 millions of dollars in unnecessary overhead and potentially
13 saddling those same taxpayers with a tremendous amount of
14 debt the ITA could incur on their behalf. Don't you find it
15 telling no one testifying in favor of the ITA never talks
16 about why the ITA is such a great idea. All you hear about
17 is how wonderful BRT would be as if ITA and BRT are one and
18 the same. Even though they are not. BRT is a separate
19 conversation. One that is happening elsewhere and just
20 getting started on the auspices of the Corridor Advisory
21 Committees, which base the question if you can't justify
22 what you're selling and you can't know on how much it will
23 cost and you don't know, how would anyone expect we, the
24 people, which by the way, is the first three words of the
25 Preamble of the Montgomery County Charter. It's we, the

1 people. We, the people. How do you expect we, the people,
2 to buy it? To put it lightly, aren't you going about this
3 ass backwards?

4 Now given our current transportation challenges,
5 both regionally and right here in the County, I find it
6 totally surreal that we're sitting here once again talking
7 about something for which there is absolutely no public
8 clamor. I would suggest that instead of obsessing over
9 building a multi-billion dollar BRT, which has been compared
10 to watering your garden with a firehouse, and get to work on
11 the immediate transportation related problems that we, the
12 people, we, the people, really care about. Repairing and,
13 where necessary, rebuilding our neighborhood streets, many
14 of which are in deplorable condition, enhancing Ride On bus
15 service, not eliminating routes to help fund BRT as the Task
16 Force's proposal will appear to allow, making Metro rail,
17 which tens of thousands, tens of thousands of County
18 residents already use every weekday. Make it safer and more
19 reliable and maybe even doing something, anything about
20 WMATA's stunning incompetence and dysfunction. If the
21 County can make at least some progress on these and other
22 doable issues, I believe it could begin to restore the
23 confidence that County residents once had in our Government
24 and its ability to get things done. Thank you very much for
25 your time.

1 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Dickter. Ms.
2 Ditzler.

3 MS. DITZLER: Yes. Hello. Thank you. I'm
4 Barbara Ditzler and I'm speaking on behalf of the League of
5 Women Voters of Montgomery County.

6 Many of you know that the league develops the
7 positions by consensus so everything that I say is based on
8 the consensus positions that we have on record. We
9 completely endorse the need for and the construction of a
10 rapid transit system that augments and complements our
11 current County transit. We support an efficient transit
12 system that is readily available to County residents to
13 minimize the time a trip takes as well as the harmful
14 effects of commuting on our environment. And this is
15 something that no one has mentioned as of now.

16 The system must interconnect with safe pedestrian
17 and bicycle access and be part of the network of
18 possibilities for mobility around the County and beyond. We
19 want it to connect to other's jurisdictions. Is that
20 something that the ITA will do better than the County will?
21 That's an important question. Will it be able to connect
22 with Howard County? Frederick County? The District of
23 Columbia and across the river to Virginia eventually? Is
24 the independent transit authority the best way to accomplish
25 this? We don't have the answers to judge what is going to

1 be the most efficient and what's going to be essential, but
2 we do know that it's important to consider and we hope that
3 this is possible.

4 Funding. We support local revenue sources that
5 are equitable, convenient, certain, adequate and diverse. A
6 progressive income tax is a preferred source of revenue
7 followed by taxes on property, vehicles, development as well
8 as fuel tax. We oppose local sales tax as a potential
9 source of revenue. Every resident in Montgomery County will
10 benefit from a rapid transit system whether they actively
11 use it or not. Just as every resident benefits from a good
12 school system. Whether they currently have students in the
13 schools or not. It's part of the County process. It's part
14 of the County infrastructure.

15 Management of transit functions is a big question
16 and it appears that much thought has gone into the planning,
17 into accommodating this new transit system. And we
18 appreciate the work that you've done and the study report
19 that certainly elaborates more thoroughly on it than it had
20 in the past. The tables developed regarding these functions
21 help to clarify positions and the responsibilities for
22 various tasks. With ultimate authority mainly belonging to
23 the elected officials.

24 We have questions. Will citizens feel confident
25 in their knowledge of the structure so that concerns may be

1 addressed appropriately? Will the system be streamlined
2 enough to not be cumbersome? Will there be transparent
3 communication among all the functions? Our County must
4 serve all citizens and provide good mobility opportunities
5 for all. Thank you for this opportunity.

6 MR. WINSTON: Thank you very much, Ms. Ditzler.
7 And that completes the statements of this panel. Thank you
8 all very much.

9 Let me call the next panel to the front table.
10 Brian Ditzler, Tracey Johnstone, Stephen Miller, Michael
11 McLay and Margret Schoap. Mr. Ditzler.

12 MR. DITZLER: Thank you. My name is Brian
13 Ditzler, speaking on behalf of the Sierra Club Montgomery
14 County.

15 We strongly support development of a rapid transit
16 system in Montgomery County that includes the building of
17 protected bicycle lanes as soon as practical. Fortunately,
18 the County Council, the County Executive and the Transit
19 Task Force also agree on the need for at least Phase 1 of a
20 rapid transit system. Unfortunately, the County Council and
21 the County Executive don't appear to agree on the timing and
22 best approach to fund, develop and operate the rapid transit
23 system despite the very comprehensive draft report the
24 Transit Task Force issued on how best to structure and
25 potentially pay for an RT system.

1 Another major obstacle to overcome is that many
2 residents are in denial on the need for a rapid transit
3 system in our county. Especially if their taxes need to be
4 raised to help pay for even Phase 1 of such a system. Those
5 who continue to question the need for an RT system need to
6 explain how they would lessen the increasing congestion on
7 our roads and how they would maintain a safe, healthy and
8 sustainable place to live and work as more and more people
9 continue to move here.

10 Rapid transit systems have proven effective in
11 jurisdictions across the U.S. and around the world. RTS
12 will help address current and future congestion problems,
13 reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help, and can help
14 create walkable, bicycle friendly, mixed use developments
15 around transit hubs. RTS will provide the transportation
16 needed to attract employers and the jobs they provide that
17 otherwise will locate in surrounding jurisdictions. Transit
18 is also needed for low and moderate income families without
19 cars and it is preferred by many millennials too. Another
20 major benefit of more transit is that it can replace the
21 number of cars on our roads, which would have a significant
22 impact on the quality of the air we breathe. Emissions from
23 motor vehicles not only are a major cause of climate change,
24 they have been linked to respiratory and cardiovascular
25 problems, immune system damage as well as neurological,

1 reproductive, developmental and other health problems.

2 Those who want to keep driving their cars can do
3 so. But they likely will find it more pleasant and faster
4 to take rapid transit when they travel on one of the road
5 corridors that has a lane or two dedicated to rapid transit
6 vehicles. We were pleased but not surprised that the cost
7 benefit analysis that was completed by the Sage Policy Group
8 for the Transit Task Force found that the RTS is an
9 affordable and desirable investment for the County. Sierra
10 Club Montgomery County believes an increase in the County's
11 gasoline sales tax should definitely be one of the financing
12 options considered as well as possibly congestion pricing
13 and even a per mile road usage charge as the State of Oregon
14 is rolling out in order to influence driver behavior while
15 helping raise necessary funds. We support the rapid transit
16 system. Thank you.

17 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Ditzler. Ms.
18 Johnstone.

19 MS. JOHNSTONE: The button is not big enough. My
20 name is Tracey Johnstone and I don't want to frighten
21 everybody, but I'm going to improvise because a lot of
22 people have said what I already have to say. But first off,
23 I want to agree with Mr. Ditzler. You know, some people,
24 you know, right now on Twitter, one of the top items on
25 Twitter is people talking about Diana Ross having a baby at

1 the age of 71. And this is what's streaming on Twitter. I
2 mean I wonder if these people don't believe in transit. I
3 mean I'm just like some people just aren't reality based
4 here. A lot of people are talking about oh, I've lived here
5 all my life. Well, I haven't. I've lived out, and, I've
6 lived here for about 20 years, but I've lived on islands. I
7 lived on Key West. And I lived on what, Aquidneck Island in
8 Rhode Island. And now I live on something called Bethesda
9 Island, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Island because traffic just
10 keeps me on that island at certain times of day. I have a
11 friend in Columbia that is always inviting me to dinner.
12 And, and I'm like I don't go to Columbia for dinner because
13 it would take me over an hour to get there. Route 29 is a
14 natural for bus rapid transit or light rail. And it's, it's
15 insane we don't have it. I'm a driver. I love my car. But
16 my car doesn't like doing stop and go traffic. And you know
17 what, in real cities, they have transit. You know, and
18 Route 29 is built like a, is straight as a gun barrel.
19 Let's put buses on it to drive like bullets. I mean it's
20 crazy that we don't have an integrated transit system that
21 acknowledges the major pathways in this County.

22 I've lived on the Z-11. That can be unpleasant.
23 You know. I've ridden a Z-2, the Z-4, the Z-8, Z-11. And
24 that's just not the way real cities do it. We're not going
25 to lose citizen people here. It's only going to go grow.

1 So the idea that we can just kind of improve our roads and
2 fill the potholes and that's going to make it all better is
3 crazy. You know. And I do, oh, I want to say another
4 point. One gentleman made a good point. I don't know why
5 we're talking about the ITA and BRT at the same time, but
6 here we are. Yeah. I think we need an independent
7 authority to bring coherence to this system. Whether it's,
8 you know, me having to, you know, transfer to get to, to go
9 down Wisconsin Avenue, Ride On, you know, to WMATA or, or
10 whatever. I, we need a transit czar. I don't care if, I
11 don't care if they wear a funny hat or red or black shoes,
12 but we need someone to bring a coherent whole to this.

13 I mean look at the way, look at Paris. Look at
14 London. Look at New York. Look at Toronto. They laugh at
15 us. We should be ashamed. Let's join the 21st century,
16 folks, and fund transit.

17 MR. MILLER: Outstanding.

18 MR. WINSTON: Stephen, Mr. Miller.

19 MR. MILLER: Hi. Good evening. Yeah. I've got a
20 handout if people would like to have a copy. Just the, if
21 you want to pass this around. There may not be enough.
22 There are more people than I thought were going to be here.

23 Anyway, my name is Stephen Miller. I've been a
24 resident of Montgomery County since 1960. My God. When my
25 parents moved down here from New York. I've lived in

1 Windermere since 1980. I represent North Bethesda
2 neighborhoods. I'm an officer of the Heritage Walk
3 Homeowners Association and a member of the Luxmanor Citizens
4 Association.

5 Transportation is a major issue in the County.
6 However, the proposed BRT is not an economic or practical
7 solution to the problem. According to BRT experts, and your
8 attachments will show that Montgomery County does not now
9 have nor will it ever have, come remotely close to the
10 minimum population and housing density criteria that would
11 justify a BRT system. And your own reports prove this.

12 It does not have the general support of the County
13 as the population has little information on how it will
14 work. But more important, how it will be funded. It does
15 not take into account changes in work demographics which
16 have been talked about and why County residents have chosen
17 to live in Montgomery County. We've had a Ride On system
18 that has not worked effectively so why will a more extensive
19 system work any better? We have major intersections that
20 slow down traffic where as a BRT requires high speeds that
21 are incompatible with existing traffic, pedestrians and
22 cyclists.

23 Go on Rockville Pike. It took me forever because
24 of that to get here. We have light cycles, signals that
25 have not been synchronized to allow for movement of

1 trafficland are not sensitive to the needs at different
2 times of the day. Projected routes are taking people
3 between existing Metro stops, do not go into D.C.
4 Montgomery County is suburban, not urban and will take up
5 lanes desperately needed for vehicles. Conventional buses
6 are far less expensive and have flexibility that a BRT
7 lacks. Unlike high density urban areas, our County is very
8 spread out and residents will not use buses to go to
9 shopping or take buses to go to Metro or our Ride On system
10 is showing it doesn't work. Rush hour traffic is extremely
11 congested, but there are lost costly solutions. The
12 service, the light cycling, Uber, Lyft. Along Rockville
13 Pike, there are too many intersections for a dedicated route
14 that would also omit access to commercial and residential
15 ventures along the route and creating more gridlock, and
16 also cut-through traffic like on Old Georgetown Road. We
17 live in a suburban environment, not an urban environment and
18 I think it's important that we spend the money to keep this
19 County what it is and what it should be. Not just take care
20 of a few people with an awful lot of money spent. Thank
21 you.

22 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Miller. Mr. McLay.

23 MR. McLAY: My name is Michael Mclay. I live at
24 103 Upshur Circle in Gaithersburg, Maryland, which is in the
25 Washingtonian Woods Subdivision. The CCT is going to be on

1 two sides of our subdivision and yet, I'll probably never
2 use it because it'll take me a half hour, well, take me 15
3 minutes to walk to the only station that will be nearby,
4 which is going to be in the farm across the road that's
5 going to be developed. Part of the reason for moving this
6 CCT through our subdivision or around our subdivision was so
7 it would be able to go through Belward Farm because the
8 developer wanted to go through there. And if you look at
9 the route that the CCT is taking, it's wandering all over
10 the place. It looks like something that was designed by a
11 bunch of developers who wanted to have a modern
12 transportation system they could say was in their
13 neighborhood. That's not really a good justification for
14 routing your public transportation.

15 But I've gotten off the subject a bit because
16 really what I'd like to talk about is the new technology
17 that's going to be coming down the, well, is here actually.
18 And that is autonomous vehicles. The Tesla automobiles
19 currently testing driving their car from San Francisco up to
20 Portland and back. That's their test, one of their test
21 routes. So there is a company over, or an organization over
22 in Europe that's planning on putting autonomous
23 transportation vehicles on city streets in the next year.
24 And it will run at a slow rate of speed, which is what you'd
25 expect initially, but as they gain knowledge and ability,

1 the speeds can go up. And one of the bad, so this new
2 technology is just coming along. It's really going to
3 displace the need for a bus transit system because instead
4 people are order up a vehicle just like they could order up
5 Uber. It shows up at their door. They get in the vehicle
6 and tell it take me to where I want to go.

7 Now if you go out and do a customer survey and you
8 ask them would you like to walk, you know, 20 minutes to get
9 to a bus rapid transit station, sit on a bus with a bunch of
10 other people, getting 30 miles per gallon equivalent burning
11 diesel fuel or would you like to have an electric vehicle
12 that gets 100 miles a gallon equivalent, pick you up at your
13 house and take you to your destination? I think the obvious
14 answer is the latter. It's what people are going to want in
15 the future. So why are we designing a system that is going
16 to be the equivalent of the C&O Canal being built right next
17 to the railroad that displaced it totally? It's kind of a
18 waste of time to put the money into that effort when we
19 could be working on doing a better job of timing street
20 lights and developing a system where you can have platoons
21 of autonomous vehicles moving together in concert, very
22 closely together because they're communicating with each
23 other effectively being a train of cars working in tandem
24 together.

25 The bus rapid transit system on a five minute

1 headway. That means there is 13,000 feet of empty roadway
2 not being used. You could put 800 cars in that space.

3 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. McLay. Ms. Schoap.

4 MS. SCHOAP: Yes. Good evening Task Force and
5 thank you for spending the many hundreds of hours you have
6 on, on this important issue.

7 My name is Margret Schoap. I'm here tonight to
8 speak on behalf of my coalition called the TAME Coalition.
9 We collaborate with citizens and government and
10 organizations to secure transit alternatives to Midcounty
11 Highway extended. I was on the Germantown Master Plan, the
12 last one that ended in 2009 and I am now on the BRT CAC for
13 355 North.

14 I'm incredibly and surprisingly impressed with the
15 work in progress that that CAC is doing to look for the,
16 towards the future of transportation systems, which is
17 transit. I've learned more about the ITA in listening to
18 these last three public hearings, reading your websites,
19 realizing the, the very incredibly difficult decisions you
20 have to make. And I still come up with supporting a, an ITA
21 that would be effective. That would determine revenue
22 sources in a predictable and dedicated way that would
23 distribute the cost equally and fairly to County citizens
24 and transit riders. I don't know how, but I am, I believe
25 that can be overcome. I believe all these concerns that

1 have been addressed tonight can be overcome by a group like
2 yours. I believe, most importantly, that you must be
3 accountable to the public.

4 Montgomery County will not be able to build these
5 new and expanding transit systems just relying on our budget
6 alone. There needs to be something done now and I believe
7 the ITA with the authorities that will be over you and
8 watching you and with you will make proper agreements and
9 decisions. When the Metro was built downtown, I just came
10 to D.C. in those years. And Georgetown did not want the
11 Metro. They didn't think it was going to be appropriate.
12 And that was just one station. I support it. I believe we
13 are in a huge transition and transformation time for this
14 County and I support that you go, we all support that you go
15 forward with the BRT and with an ITA. Thank you.

16 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Ms. Schoap. And thank
17 you to this panel.

18 And now I'd like to call up the next panel.
19 Gordon Brenne, Michael Pfetsch, David Drake, Geri Rosenberg,
20 and Tanzi Strafford.

21 MR. BRENNE: Good evening. My name is Gordie
22 Brenne and I'm vice president of the Montgomery County
23 Taxpayers League. Thanks for the opportunity to testify,
24 and I hope my comments will help as you finalize the report.

25 Most importantly, the Taxpayers League favors

1 economic development over tax increases to pay for
2 transportation solutions. Therefore, the Taxpayers League
3 remains skeptical about the reports, recommendation to
4 combine economic development that benefits the State the
5 most with higher local taxes. The State is given only a
6 small role in financing ITA transit investments. We were
7 pleased to see a rollback of the ITA's scope and scale in
8 the most recent draft report. We're also pleased to see
9 Council oversight expanded to include the operating budget.
10 This is similar to the WSSC oversight. Establishing a State
11 infrastructure bank to finance the projects could eliminate
12 the need for an ITA altogether. In addition to giving the
13 State a major financing role, this would reduce interest
14 rates risks and significantly reduce debt service costs to
15 help keep property taxes within the Charter limit.

16 And I'd like to recognize that Robin Ficker is
17 with us tonight.

18 And independent validation of project costs and
19 benefits and an independent board consisting of
20 transportation specialists would also help. Let me turn to
21 taxes. They certainly concern us especially on top of
22 already expected increases to address income tax revenue
23 shortfalls. Not only would this adversely impact our
24 residents, but economic development would be hurt by
25 additions to some of the highest taxes in the nation.

1 Planned operations seems to be overly dependent on tax
2 subsidies from State and Federal sources that may not be
3 sustainable. Exacerbating going concern issues in the event
4 of an economic downturn. Also we would insist, and this is
5 probably my most important point, that any transfer of
6 current costs from the BRT to the new ITA be accompanied by
7 a proportionate property tax credit on each taxpayer's bill
8 to avoid using the ITA as an ATM for repurposing current tax
9 revenues.

10 Let me turn to borrowing costs rather quickly.
11 We, like Jerry, could not find the interest rate that was
12 used in the appendices to project costs. There is a
13 significant interest rate risk, however, if the market
14 downgrades ITA bonds and/or interest rates climb. Contrary
15 to the report's glib logic, ITA's borrowing costs will
16 likely be significantly higher than the State and certainly
17 higher than the County's. If we negotiate with the State to
18 establish an infrastructure bank and obtain loans, the State
19 could help us manage interest rate risks and the ITA could
20 have a smaller treasury function. If this debt is
21 structured, enhanced and subordinated, we may be able to
22 eliminate the leverage on the County books while
23 implementing the BRT within the existing DOT, avoiding the
24 ITA altogether and saving lots of money.

25 Lastly, there should be an affordability limit on

1 debt service costs as a percentage of operating revenues
2 consistent with the County's affordability policy. Thank
3 you for considering these issues.

4 MR. WINSTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Brenne.
5 Our next speaker is Michael Pfetsch. I trust I pronounced
6 that correctly.

7 MR. PFETSCH: You did very well.

8 MR. WINSTON: Thank you. At least I did one good
9 thing tonight.

10 MR. PFETSCH: Good evening. I'm Michael Pfetsch
11 representative to the Route 29 South Corridor Advisory
12 Committee from my Woodmoor-Pinecrest community.

13 Ostensibly, we are here to comment on the method
14 of funding a new Montgomery County transportation system.
15 There are many risks inherent in the process. But the
16 greatest immediate risk is the establishment of a successful
17 transit system is the successful establishment of an RTS
18 itself, which is not going to well. The process of planning
19 for an acquisition of a transit system through development
20 is proven to be a challenge to this County. The County has
21 not yet demonstrated that it has the capacity to conduct
22 acquisition of a complex transit system through development.
23 The selection of a financing method is insignificant
24 compared with the probable outcome that the system
25 investment will fail to meet performance metrics that

1 support the goals of the land planning process. Performance
2 metrics that have never been established. However, here in
3 Montgomery County we are good at identifying a need, writing
4 contracts, then suing the contractor when the project fails
5 because we don't have the necessary expertise in capital
6 planning and investment control of constructed capital
7 acquisitions. Without that expertise we don't even know why
8 the project failed.

9 So far the performance expectations of the BRT
10 option have not been proven or even defined. In addition,
11 the County has been cavalier about the options that may
12 create severe adverse community impacts. The Council
13 advertises a position on community protection. Then the
14 project team maintains that the option is still on the
15 table. If this project is to succeed, and despite all
16 appearances, there is a truly serious intent to complete the
17 project, the planning function has to be reinforced. A
18 strategy that substitutes \$500 an hour per billable hour law
19 firms ex post to recoup failed and delayed project losses
20 instead of employing \$50 per hour transportation planners up
21 front, a strategy that is a much more likely chance to
22 achieve project success on budget on time is a predictable
23 disaster. It could only insure that the community's
24 transportation pains will continue unabated.

25 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Pfetsch. David

1 Drake.

2 MR. DRAKE: I'm David Drake, Chair of the
3 Republican Party of Legislative District 15 and a lifelong
4 resident of Montgomery County. We represent some 20,000
5 registered voters in Western Montgomery County. We strongly
6 oppose the BRT system as proposed and the ITA. In the past
7 eight years, the County has spent 70 percent of its
8 available transportation funds on transit allowing the I-270
9 corridor and I-95 to become some of the most congested in
10 the nation. We believe had we cooperated with Virginia on
11 their, on our interstates in a program that matched their
12 improvements, combine that with the Federal grant funded 11-
13 mile Rockville Pike rapid, Ride On bus rapid improvement
14 project, ROP, makes far more sense than the \$2.25 billion
15 BRT.

16 Montgomery County engaged the Institute for
17 Transportation and Development Policy in 2012 to conduct a
18 market study which basically concluded that the \$2.25
19 billion BRT was a Rolls Royce solution for a Morris Minor
20 need. They further stated and a previous Jean Cavanaugh
21 quoted from the BRT the, excuse me, the independent transit
22 and Development Policy's Institute that not only did we not
23 have the capability to manage the project, but they're
24 taking, the BRT is taking on four times what any other city
25 has ever done. Think the Silver Spring transit fiasco and

1 then think about \$2.25 billion for another capital
2 investment.

3 As for the argument that bypassing the limits of
4 the property tax increase because of the referendum was
5 imposed, those limits was held seven years ago is absurd,
6 but if the present Executive wants to scrap the limits, then
7 put them on the ballot and let the voters who passed the
8 limits repeal them.

9 As for the ITA as an instrument for funding, it
10 contains the same onerous problems it did originally,
11 virtually still unconstrained. Eminent domain, bonding and
12 taxing authority. According to the non-partisan Tax
13 Foundation, Maryland ranks 40th in the nation for its
14 business tax climate and 41st for property taxes. The
15 County Executive has already declared that we can expect a
16 10 percent property tax increase as a result of a Supreme
17 Court decision and still he wants to raise even more taxes
18 for his ill-considered transit schemes. This is a true
19 picture of one party rule out of control.

20 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Drake. Ms.
21 Rosenberg.

22 MS. ROSENBERG: Members of the Task Force, my name
23 is Geri Rosenberg from Communities for Transit and I live in
24 Silver Spring.

25 The RTS is a major investment. We all recognize

1 that. As we address existing transportation problems, we
2 also need to find ways to accommodate economic growth to
3 support the future of our communities. If we can create
4 additional transportation capacity, it's projected that we
5 will add 20 percent more residents. That's 200,000 people.
6 And 40 percent more jobs in the next 20 years. Since
7 developing infrastructure takes time, we need to get a
8 meaningful start on that sooner rather than later. If we
9 cannot do this, more people and jobs will be located outside
10 of the County resulting in more and more people driving
11 through the County to other destinations, costing the County
12 more and more money without the benefits of having the jobs
13 within the County.

14 Doing nothing is not a good alternative. There
15 are real costs associated with it, not to mention the
16 projected 70 percent increase in congestion over the next
17 quarter century. Investing in many miles of new roads in
18 the County is not a feasible alternative and would not
19 ultimately solve the problem of traffic congestion. It
20 would disrupt communities and cost many billions of dollars.
21 More than the entire RTS network. It would not address the
22 needs of 23 percent of people living in the Veirs Mill
23 corridor who rely on transit to commute. Or the thousands
24 of County residents who cannot drive due to age, disability
25 or lack of funds. Our current transportation network does

1 not meet their needs nor will it attract and retain younger
2 residents like me and my roommates who want to live and work
3 in places with easy transit access. The RTS is our best
4 investment option. Without an innovative solution like the
5 quasi-independent transit authority, we can guarantee that
6 the RTS will be developed at an incredibly slow pace and at
7 far more expensive price.

8 We cannot even begin to solve our transportation
9 problems and implement our adopted strategies for economic
10 growth without a cost effective solution and the RTS network
11 and proposed transit authority are the best ways to
12 accomplish that. Just as all County residents financially
13 support public education even if they don't use it, all
14 residents should support our transportation network. A
15 strong public education system is important to all
16 residents. And we have decided that we all benefit from it
17 just as we all will benefit from the proposed RTS whether we
18 all use it or not. The best financing option relies on a
19 combination of different sources, including local, State and
20 Federal support so as not to overburden any one group and to
21 utilize the broadest possible base. I appreciate the time
22 the Transit Task Force has spent working and presenting its
23 public draft report and I thank you for listening to the
24 public and suggesting improvements to the proposal relating
25 to tax caps, greater accountability and labor issues.

1 Montgomery County needs to develop the RTS as
2 quickly and efficiently as we can. Thank you.

3 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Ms. Rosenberg. Ms. --

4 MR. ZEPP: Excuse me, Mr. Chair, I have a
5 question.

6 MR. WINSTON: Yes.

7 MR. ZEPP: Okay. Ms. Rosenberg, since according
8 to the Transit Task Force study the soonest we would be
9 implementing BRT is eight to 12 years from now, what would
10 you propose doing in the meantime?

11 MS. ROSENBERG: Well, I think that the better, the
12 faster that we can implement it, the better so if we can
13 speed up that process that's the, that's the best thing we
14 can do. I mean already the purple line is delayed and I
15 live right on the purple line corridor so that definitely
16 affects me and my neighbors. And so the faster we can speed
17 up this process by implementing something like the
18 independent transit authority, which actually recognizes
19 that we want to try and do this sooner rather than later is
20 the most important thing.

21 MR. ZEPP: But this is assuming everything goes
22 right it's eight to 12 years from now.

23 MS. ROSENBERG: Well, assuming everything goes
24 right with the plan. But there are lots of creative
25 solutions that plenty of other places in the U.S. have done

1 that we can look into and I think that that's, that's the
2 most important thing that we can do right now is to see what
3 works and what doesn't in other places and try and look to
4 that and implement whatever will work best.

5 MR. ZEPP: So would you support the proposed
6 express services that have been discussed by other speakers?

7 MS. ROSENBERG: The express services, oh. The,
8 the ideas for a Ride On you mean? I mean --

9 MR. ZEPP: Right. Well, it's Ride On and WMATA as
10 well as free Ride On bus service.

11 MS. ROSENBERG: Anything that is improving our
12 transit service is important.

13 MR. ZEPP: So that would be that?

14 MS. ROSENBERG: Yeah. That, that includes that.
15 But we also need the BRT and not just express buses.

16 MR. ZEPP: Okay.

17 MR. WINSTON: Ms. Strafford.

18 MS. STRAFFORD: Hello. My name is Tanzi
19 Strafford. I'm a resident of Montgomery County. The ITA is
20 wrong for the community for several reasons. First, the ITA
21 will independently seize and tax property owners by passing
22 the County Charter budget limitations. It's simply wrong to
23 give such power over people to an agency that residents will
24 have no control over. County agencies are already
25 dysfunctional and incompetent. Secondly, the County and the

1 country is in a bad economic shape. The County tax base is
2 diminishing and Montgomery County faces massive shortfalls
3 due to rapidly disappearing middle class. The middle class
4 is struggling. Even in the so-called wealthy Montgomery
5 County. Many residents are on the edge of bankruptcy, but
6 they can't even move out because they're underwater on their
7 homes. Imposing new taxes on the top of already extremely
8 high Montgomery County taxes, you'll only further push the
9 middle class towards poverty.

10 Thirdly, the BRT will not relieve any traffic
11 congestion. Instead it will create more congestion. The
12 BRT is an urbanist fantasy. BRT buses will pass through
13 already congested County roads. In some cases, the bus
14 lanes will be built in medians, but in most cases, existing
15 traffic lanes will be lost to BRT use only. Like HOV lanes.
16 But the BRT will have no parking for commuters and rely
17 instead on Ride On feeder buses. Blair Lynn, former
18 columnist for The Gazette newspaper, observed the typical
19 BRT experience, I wait in the rain outside my home for a
20 feeder bus to take me to a BRT depot that lacks any parking.
21 I board the BRT bus. It drops me off eight blocks from my
22 workplace so I wait for a local bus. It's still raining.
23 To get me there. After work, it's the same process in
24 reverse. You call this improvement being it here? I call
25 it wait for three buses. Even that assessment charitably

1 assumes walking access to the Ride On buses on both ends of
2 the trip. And County leaders want to add in this mix the
3 progressive Portlandia idea of bikeways. Lastly, why
4 doesn't the County present the ITA to the voters in the form
5 of referendum on the ballot for the upcoming election in
6 2016? Let the voters decide if the ITA is the right choice.
7 Thank you.

8 MR. WINSTON: Thank you. And that, that concludes
9 the statements from this panel. Thank you very much. And
10 let me call up the next panel. Stephen Poor, Celesta
11 Jurkovich, Robin Ficker, Tom DiLiderto and Todd Solomon.
12 Mr. Poor.

13 MR. POOR: Good evening. My name is Stephen Poor.
14 I live in Silver Spring. I want to thank you for the
15 opportunity to address you on this matter yet again. But a
16 reality based opening would be an acknowledgment that this
17 is one of a seemingly endless round of attempts to talk to
18 people who have had their minds made up on the entire issue
19 before them. No actual discussion takes place here, it's
20 all process. When my children were young, our family went
21 through the familiar grind of constant and unrelenting pleas
22 about having a pet. We told our children that a pet of any
23 consequence was out of the question for us, but my children
24 were undeterred. They had a plan and a strategy. They
25 began for, by asking for a St. Bernard for a small Silver

1 Spring home. Then they asked for a German Shepherd, a
2 terrier, a dachshund, and finally a small poodle. All of
3 this was cover for the fact that they wanted a cat.
4 Everything else was okay and they would have been happy to
5 have a larger pet, but the crucial goal was always a cat.
6 They thought that hiding a cat deep in the argument was a
7 way to make it look reasonable. So it goes with the ITA.
8 Underneath all the fluff and strategy, behind all the
9 structure and nimble rhetoric, after all the reorganization
10 ideas on convoluted budget proposals, this authority is
11 mostly an attempt to impose tax increases that current a law
12 will not allow unless there is a super majority voting for
13 it on the Council.

14 The real issue in the ITA proposal is the ability
15 of the County Executive to overcome the citizen approved
16 limits on taxes in our County. Many of us in this room
17 opposed those limits and campaigned against them, but unlike
18 this Task Force, we've learned to respect them, live with
19 them and look for opportunities to rescind them through the
20 same referendum process that was used to pass them. But
21 this would mean hard votes by Council members and the
22 signature on the ordinance by an elected Executive.
23 Instead, this proposal pushes tax increases through an
24 appointed board which would be called independent once it's
25 in office. If we like the runaround we get in trying to

1 find help in reigning in WSSC, we're going to love this
2 board. There's not a single item of transportation
3 substance in this ITA proposal that cannot be accomplished
4 within the current structures of our County government.
5 Maybe we need a bit of reorganization, but we need a full
6 and permanent transportation director even more. You should
7 just stop.

8 This is a bad proposal for the same reasons as the
9 last time. The issue last time was not process. It was
10 substance. You should not have this pet tax authority. You
11 should tell officeholders to clean up their room and run the
12 County government correctly instead. If you need more tax
13 money, make your case and let the voters decide. Don't ask
14 the legislature to bring in delegations from other counties
15 to override our Charter. Thank you. Good night.

16 MS. CARRIER: I have to ask did your kids get the
17 cat?

18 MR. POOR: Of course not.

19 MS. CARRIER: Okay. Thank you. Ms. Jurkovich.

20 MS. JURKOVICH: I'm Celesta Jurkovich on the Chevy
21 Chase West Neighborhood Association Board. I also represent
22 CCCFH, the umbrella organization for 19 neighboring
23 communities with over 12,000 residents.

24 I've attended more than 20 Transit Task Force
25 meetings. Its recommendation to create an ITA is premature,

1 ill-timed and fails to demonstrate tangible public benefits
2 or cost effectiveness. Here's why. Like generals citing
3 the last war, the Task Force attempts to justify a multi-
4 billion dollar taxpayer funded BRT network conceived years
5 ago, ignoring recent transportation innovations or the state
6 of County finances. The Finance Department projects a
7 quarter billion dollar shortfall for FY '15 to '18 primarily
8 due to the Winn case. The County already had to pass a \$54
9 million reduction in this year's budget and anticipates more
10 cuts. Even without the ITA, the County Executive has warned
11 repeatedly that property tax increases are almost
12 unavoidable, likely to be significant and needed to pay for
13 normal cost increases in the current budget. The Task Force
14 characterizes ITA debt as independent, but the same County
15 residents who already pay would foot the bill, violating the
16 cap on real property taxes. Residents whose taxes fund 77
17 percent of the current County budget would also pay most of
18 the estimated \$2.2 billion in BRT, billion dollars in BRT
19 capital costs and over \$80 million annually in operating
20 costs for 48 miles of routes. New taxpayers won't magically
21 appear to pick up this tab.

22 Task Force estimates in ridership claims are also
23 questionable. How corridors are designed is the key
24 determinant of cost. Yet corridor advisory committees have
25 not even seen possible design alternatives for most of the

1 corridors. Ridership figures may also be wishful thinking.
2 The 2012 IDTP study showed that the peak demand factors for
3 the Veirs Mill, Route 29 and 355 corridors were at most 66
4 percent of the level that FTA recommends as a minimum to
5 consider BRT. Lower cost alternatives to BRT were also
6 never seriously considered. Express buses replicating Veirs
7 Mill and 355 routes proposed at a fraction of the cost of
8 BRT could be implemented in 2017. WMATA would service Veirs
9 Mill while seven day a week Ride On express buses would run
10 between Gaithersburg and Grosvenor Metro every 10 to 15
11 minutes. Implementing these tests could both demonstrate
12 transit's potential and grow its user base.

13 County drivers who live and work in different
14 jurisdictions are unlikely to be BRT riders. Those
15 potential users will only be reached by a regional, not
16 local, network. The Task Force was uninterested in them or
17 the majority of County drivers who must make multi-stop
18 trips for routine household activities. So this legislation
19 may, in effect, be creating a family driver tax. The Task
20 Force has failed to make its case to the public.

21 MR. WINSTON: Thank you. Thank you, Ms.
22 Jurkovich. Mr. Ficker.

23 MR. FICKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and
24 members of the committee. I came here to testify against
25 the increased taxes authority, the ITA.

1 We have a, but actually I hope you give it a lot
2 of publicity because that will help us pass our term limits
3 question that we're going to have on the ballot next
4 November. So we can get some fresh ideas in Montgomery
5 County limiting the Council and the Executive to three
6 consecutive four-year terms.

7 There are hundreds of thousands of people in this
8 County that are qualified for these jobs. The Council is
9 made up of a group of scaredy cats. They've got this big
10 tax increase proposal, but they're not holding the hearing.
11 They're having unelected people holding the hearing.
12 They're scaredy cats because they know they can vote
13 unanimously to override their Charter limit, but they want
14 to override but not get the credit. They're scaredy cats
15 because they won't put a repealer of the Charter limit on
16 the ballot with them so we can vote them out and re-affirm
17 the Charter limit.

18 We just had the largest gasoline tax increase
19 endorsed by one vote. By that I mean one vote insured we
20 had a 20 cent a gallon increase in the State gasoline tax.
21 All Montgomery County legislators, except maybe one didn't
22 get elected, voted for it. Now they need to do their job in
23 Annapolis and bring some of that transportation money back
24 home. They're not doing their job in Annapolis.

25 The Ficker Amendment passed in 2008 and it was

1 opposed by all the elected officials. It passed in the same
2 year our present County Council President who was Council
3 President then passed a County budget that increased 14.6
4 percent in one year. Since then we've had a 156 percent
5 increase in the County energy tax. We've had the ambulance
6 fee pushed through even though the voters said it wasn't a
7 good idea. We've had telephone taxes. Speed camera taxes
8 and the bag tax. They can never get enough money and this
9 is all about getting more money. I haven't heard one person
10 here tonight who is in favor of this increased tax authority
11 suggest one little cut in the budget to help pay for it. No
12 one, they all yes, we want this. No cuts have been
13 suggested except for the Sierra Club. They announced a cut
14 tonight. They announced they were not letting the three
15 Republican candidates for Congress in the 8th District, the
16 one independent candidate for Congress in the 8th District
17 and the nine Republican candidates in the 6th Congressional
18 District testify in their forum where they're five
19 Democratic candidates and just, they are testifying. That's
20 the only cut I've heard mentioned here tonight. Vote
21 against the ITA.

22 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Ficker. Mr.
23 DiLiderto.

24 MR. DiLIDERTO: Thank you for having me here
25 tonight. First, I do want, I'm a meteorologist and I work,

1 I live actually in Takoma Park, Maryland. And honestly, I
2 was pretty happy about the gas tax because we're actually
3 finally attempting to put a cost on carbon. You know, and
4 as an atmospheric scientist, our future, and since I am a
5 millennial and I'll be living through this generation, what
6 we do with so much change, thanks to climate change. And
7 actually probably should be higher.

8 I do want to say first, a couple of things have
9 been talked about here tonight that have been a little bit
10 interesting to me. First, you hear people talk about we,
11 the people, Montgomery County's Charter. Well, Montgomery
12 County is only 47 percent white and as I look out here in
13 the crowd tonight, we're a little off on those demographics
14 here. So you have to keep that in mind while we look at
15 this. This is a large group, a large population and it's
16 not really here. And we might be hearing a loud, a lot of
17 loud voices from a minority few here in the County. And we
18 have to keep that in mind when we're going through here.

19 Honestly, I'm hugely in favor of the BRT. I just
20 moved to Takoma Park. I've just moved to Montgomery County.
21 I just bought my first house a little over a year ago and
22 I'm expecting my first child here in November. And one of
23 the things, what I brought up to all of my friends and all
24 the people who move into D.C. who are in my generation,
25 we're working middle class jobs. We're making, we spend a

1 lot of money, and a lot of the areas is why? Why would you
2 move to Montgomery County? You can't go anywhere. And
3 that's the first thing to be brought up that all of us. And
4 it's true. There's a larger portion of Montgomery County
5 that I don't go to specifically because I don't want to get
6 into my car, get angry and drive someplace here in, in, in
7 Montgomery County. But I have friends who live in other
8 sections of Montgomery County, in Rockville, even up in
9 Gaithersburg and Wheaton. And I just simply don't go there
10 because I don't want to go from Takoma Park all the way
11 elsewhere in the County. And that's where BRT can really,
12 really be quite significant.

13 One other thing I do want to mention is there has
14 been some misconception of how people use Uber and Lyft.
15 People do not use Uber and Lyft to go to work. People do
16 not use Uber and Lyft to come home from work. People, at
17 least of my generation, use Uber and Lyft to go from either
18 a restaurant or a bar to another restaurant or a bar and
19 then to home. Those would be located in urban districts
20 which would be served by the BRT. So that's, using that as
21 an analogy for why BRT would not be useful, I don't really
22 think flies.

23 Another thing there's, I don't have that much time
24 left. Is just this idea that we can wait for autonomous
25 cars and increasing technology. On September 1st of this

1 year, New York Times wrote an article that about one of
2 Google's driverless cars. One of their biggest problems is
3 human drivers. Those aren't going anywhere in the meantime.
4 There's, to rely on this idea that we're going to have these
5 magical technology to come in that's going to somehow
6 replace, replace buses is really not all that feasible. And
7 I will say, my last statement here is with, talking about
8 Bogota. I've also visited Bogota and I have friends who
9 lived there for a long time. Bogota's Transmilenio pushes
10 1.4 million people per day. Along that route, traffic is
11 reduced 32 percent. Traffic fatalities down 89 percent.
12 And carbon reduction is down 300,000 tons. I think that's a
13 pretty good deal. Thank you.

14 MR. WINSTON: Thank you very much. Mr. Solomon,
15 please.

16 MR. SOLOMON: Hi. I'm Todd Solomon. I'm also
17 from Takoma Park. I'm not going to go into the reasons why
18 I think BRT makes sense for the County because I think other
19 people have already spoken to that. But do count me,
20 please, among the residents who understand that BRT is
21 absolutely critical to the County's ability to thrive.

22 I want instead to speak to the idea of
23 establishing an Independent Transit Authority, which I
24 comment. Twenty years ago my wife and I taught at
25 Montgomery College on the Rockville campus. We commuted

1 from Takoma Park by car. Our experience at MC was great.
2 The school had a motivated population of students. They
3 were eager to learn. The commute was horrible. It was
4 horrible during the day. It was horrible at night. It was
5 horrible on 270. It was horrible on Rockville Pike. And we
6 didn't stay very long at MC. We both sought other jobs
7 because of the traffic. And I tried, you know, Ride On
8 buses which are stuck in the same lanes as all the drivers
9 are. My wife actually took a pay cut to teach where she had
10 a shorter commuter by Metrorail. And that was two decades
11 ago. Nothing really has changed except the volume of cars
12 or at the least the volume of cars seems to have increased
13 and I don't even drive outside the beltway in Montgomery
14 County anymore. So, yeah, you know, individual vehicle
15 miles traveled might be down as a trend, but the absolute
16 number of vehicle miles traveled has increased. In fact,
17 the first six months of 2015, the Federal Highway
18 Administration reports was an absolute record in America in
19 terms of total vehicle miles traveled. So, and that was, it
20 didn't last very long because in July the monthly record
21 actually, you know, was broken again.

22 If in 20 years the County has been unable to fund
23 development of any kind of rapid transit network under
24 existing governance structure, there's absolutely no reason
25 to expect that we're going to have a different outcome under

1 those same structures anytime in the near future. Right?
2 Whether it's political courage, you know, as, as both these
3 gentlemen have pointed out. Whatever it is, the County must
4 find a way out from beneath the financing and governance
5 restrictions that have impeded a transit solution for so
6 long. And that's why I recommend establishing an
7 Independent Transit Authority as the most vital step toward
8 a more livable sustainable future for the County. Thanks.

9 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Solomon. And that
10 concludes the statements of this panel. Thank you all very
11 much. And let me now call the next panel.

12 Eric Hensal, Garrett Hennigan, Howard Greif, James
13 Williamson, and David Whyman. Mr. Hensal. Is Mr. Hensal
14 here?

15 MR. HENSAL: Oh yeah.

16 MR. WINSTON: Okay. Good.

17 MR. HENSAL: I'm right here. I just got to grab
18 glasses.

19 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Technological difficulties.

20 MR. HENSAL: I've got good eyesight.

21 MR. WINSTON: And push your button, please. Mr.
22 Hensal.

23 MR. HENSAL: Good evening. This Independent
24 Transit Authority proposal is really nothing more than red
25 light district politics where developers pay to play with

1 elected officials to fabricate policies favoring privileged
2 insiders over the rest of us. This proposal is payback for
3 hundreds of thousands of dollars in developer campaign
4 contributions to the County Executive and many County
5 Council members for some time now. No credible evidence
6 proves that an excellent transit system is impossible to
7 create under our current Charter provided we have excellent
8 management. While our current County Administration cannot
9 build a parking deck in Silver Spring, excellence seems
10 unlikely, but this is a failure of leadership, not of law.

11 So what is the real goal of the ITA? The goal is
12 not just raising taxes over Charter limits. The goal is not
13 simply to distance elected officials from unpopular tax and
14 policy decisions. The goal is not to be merely an anti-
15 Democratic con cheating voters out of a real voice on taxes
16 and transit. No. These acts are just a means to an end.
17 The real goal of the ITA is to socialize costs and privatize
18 gains for the developer community. Developer projects force
19 transit demand costs on us while they profit from that
20 transit access. And instead of paying a fair share
21 reflecting this reality, they use campaign contributions to
22 collude with elected officials to fabricate a scheme that
23 makes us all pay. From its first word to last, this cynical
24 act is an immoral violation of the public's trust and must
25 not become law.

1 MR. WINSTON: Garrett Hennigan. Mr. Hennigan.

2 MR. HENNIGAN: Members of the Task Force, thank
3 you for the opportunity to testify today on the draft report
4 and the proposed transit authority. My name is Garrett
5 Hennigan and I'm the grassroots advocacy coordinator for the
6 Washington Area Bicyclists Association.

7 For all the reasons outlined in the draft report
8 and many of the reasons we've heard today, the proposed
9 rapid transit system has enormous potential to solidify
10 Montgomery County's economic future with greater access to
11 jobs, greater mobility, more attractive walkable, bikeable
12 communities. By taking advantage of current shifts in mode
13 share, a strong rapid transit system can coax commuters out
14 of their cars with more transportation options. But
15 delivering, deliberately building this system into bicycle
16 networks and emphasizing bicycle access will only magnify
17 these shifts. This summer Montgomery County Planning
18 Department kicked off a refresh of their county-wide bike
19 master plan, which will lay out a comprehensive network of
20 low stress bikeways. Unlike previous efforts, the aim to
21 target, the aim is to target the majority of people who are
22 interested in biking, but concerned about the roads that
23 they must travel on. Building a network of low stress
24 bikeways is how we accomplish that. Since we only have so
25 many streets, the bicycle network and, and bus rapid transit

1 network will and should overlap. As we have seen with
2 Metro, good bike access to transit stations means easier,
3 more numerous multi-modal trips. Outside of stations,
4 protected bike infrastructure and bus guideways can co-exist
5 on the same roads. If designed and managed with the right
6 priorities and coordinated from the start, a bus rapid
7 transit system and bike network can complement each other
8 well.

9 To achieve this level of coordination in the end
10 result, the transit authority or whatever government
11 structure we, we end up having must be accountable to
12 existing and ongoing planning efforts. To avoid operating
13 in a separated silo planning design, operation should all be
14 deeply coordinated with existing efforts, including existing
15 agencies. Speed of implementation is important, but
16 achieving the best result is crucial. Thank you.

17 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Hennigan. Howard
18 Greif. Mr. Greif here? All right. Mr. Williamson.

19 MR. WILLIAMSON: James Williamson. I'm a lifetime
20 resident of Silver Spring. I'm not going to comment on the
21 various tax and spending recommendations of the Task Force
22 because Mr. Leggett has already decided what he wants to do.
23 His mind is made up and has been for years. When he
24 announced the BRT in May of 2012, he stated it would be
25 funded with a property tax. In July 2012, I and many others

1 testified before the original Task Force regarding the BRT.
2 The majority were opposed yet at the end of the evening, Mr.
3 Leggett said we're going to build the BRT, but thanks for
4 coming. We do have some parting gifts for you on the way
5 out.

6 Numerous other times hearings have exposed the
7 fallacy of your ill-conceived, unnecessary and illogical
8 BRT/ITA which go hand-in-hand. I have said it before and
9 will continue to say it. There still has not ever been a
10 study that says a BRT will lessen congestion and improve
11 traffic. Not in the '80s, the '90s and not now. The ITDP
12 recognized as the experts in these matters say Montgomery
13 County is below the minimum threshold for a bus lane, but
14 that is ignored and you forge ahead. Facts are stubborn
15 things, but they're ignored at every turn. When asked the
16 name of the quote/unquote many businesses that will be
17 locating in White Oak, we are given a name of a Chinese
18 pharmaceutical company that doesn't even exist. A Council
19 staffer passed along the tidbit that according to an
20 attorney for one of the developers, at least half of the
21 jobs created by the White Oak development will be work from
22 home jobs. I don't imagine they will be crowding the roads
23 going to work.

24 According to the Federal Transit Administration,
25 for the last 40 years the record shows for transit projects,

1 ridership was way over estimated and costs substantially
2 underestimated. I doubt if Montgomery County will be any
3 different. Seems like a lot of smoke and mirrors going on
4 here. But we shouldn't even be here tonight. The BRT
5 routes in question are still in the conceptual phase being
6 studied by citizen's advisory committees as to their
7 viability. Suppose those committees come back and say no to
8 all the routes for various reasons? Does anyone honestly
9 believe Mr. Leggett would back off and look for an
10 alternative? Not in a million years. If Mr. Leggett is so
11 sure, why did he conveniently forget to mention his BRT/ITA
12 scheme and the tax increase that goes with it before last
13 year's primary and election? If he truly believed in the
14 ITA, he would put it before the voters in a referendum or
15 doesn't he trust the voters? If he truly had the courage of
16 his convictions, he would accompany the cost of his scheme
17 in everyone's property tax notice this year instead of
18 sticking a flyer in the envelope with all these supposed
19 benefits.

20 I will leave you with a reminder of what Maryland
21 State Comptroller Peter Franchot told the Silver Spring
22 Advisory Board in May. There should be a moratorium on
23 taxes in Maryland. Government has enough money. It needs
24 to spend the money more wisely. Montgomery County doesn't
25 need a BRT that studies prove won't ease congestion.

1 Montgomery County doesn't need an ITA to tax us more. We
2 are taxed enough already. Thank you.

3 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Williamson. David
4 Whyman.

5 MR. WHYMAN: My name is David Whyman. I am a
6 senior at Walt Whitman High School and I would like to thank
7 the Task Force for giving me the opportunity to testify
8 tonight.

9 Having spent my summer interning with the Task
10 Force and studying this issue and attending all the
11 meetings, I am confident after what I have learned that if
12 this proposal is slightly modified, bus rapid transit will
13 bring great benefits to our community. Now, I'm a high
14 school senior going into the college application process.
15 So college interviewers are frequently asking me, David,
16 where do you see yourself in 10 years? Well, if we don't
17 pass this proposal, 10 years from now, I see myself stuck in
18 traffic on I-270 during rush hour. Okay. The data confirms
19 what everyone who has ever driven in this County already
20 knows, which is that the traffic is horrible and getting
21 worse. The congestion is projected to increase by 63
22 percent by 2040 unless we construct bus rapid transit.

23 Now bus rapid transit vehicles will be able to
24 glide right past rush hour traffic congestion through
25 dedicated guideways. This will create a huge incentive for

1 frustrated car drivers to switch to bus rapid transit. Now
2 even if people never set foot on a bus rapid transit
3 vehicle, they will still benefit from this proposal. This
4 is true, first, because bus rapid transit will reduce
5 commute times even for those who remain in their cars. This
6 is true because when people switch from cars to bus rapid
7 transit, it reduces the number of cars on the road. So that
8 means people who choose to remain in their cars will have
9 fewer cars to contend with, less congestion and lower
10 commute times.

11 Now, secondly, this proposal will benefit the
12 public health. This is because when we take cars off the
13 road, we reduce the noxious vehicle emissions that are
14 polluting the air that we breathe. A recent national study
15 by the Federal Transit Administration shows that bus rapid
16 transit reduces vehicle exhaust by 33 percent per passenger
17 per mile relative to cars. Reducing vehicle exhaust is
18 important because according to a study by the Environmental
19 Health and, the Environmental and Human Health Initiative,
20 high levels of vehicle exhaust can exacerbate respiratory
21 illnesses and can even cause deadly asthma and heart attacks
22 endangering people like my father, who suffers from asthma.

23 Now, this proposal has a great many benefits and
24 we need the ITA to accomplish that. However, I'm also
25 concerned with one aspect of it. I am concerned with the

1 way that this proposal could impact my school. Now the
2 Transit Task Force's draft report says that this proposal
3 could lead to the construction of 56,000 new dwelling units.
4 Now the problem is that our County frequently exempts
5 developers from paying full impact taxes on the huge
6 developments that they create near transit stations. Now if
7 we allow 56,000 dwelling units, that could increase the
8 amount of students in our already overcrowded schools. If
9 those dwelling units are exempt from impact taxes, the
10 schools will be without the money that they need to build
11 new classrooms to accommodate these students. My AP Physics
12 classroom that I will be in tomorrow has 36 kids and an
13 overwhelmed teacher. We cannot add more students to these
14 schools and expect to continue the high level of school
15 performance that we've had. I support this proposal, but I
16 urge you to make sure the development it causes will be
17 subject to full impact taxes. Thank you very much.

18 MR. WINSTON: Thank you Mr. Whyman. And thank you
19 to this panel. We'll now move on to the next panel.

20 And that is Marilyn Piety, Donna Barron, Amy
21 Ginsburg, Eileen Finnegan and Paul Jarosinski. Good
22 evening. Ms. Piety, you're first up.

23 MS. PIETY: Thank you. I am Marilyn Piety
24 testifying as an individual. However, many of you know me
25 and know that I'm active in both civic and political

1 affairs.

2 This proposal for an independent transit agency is
3 misguided and should be rejected. The benefits which are
4 debatable at best do not justify the costs. It would raise
5 taxes that would be unsustainable for many residents. I'm
6 also disappointed that this proposal is being put forward in
7 a way that does not make clear that its underhanded purpose
8 is to break our tax cap and allow unlimited tax increases by
9 unelected appointees. We should be reducing our debt, not
10 raising it with speculative projects costing billions. What
11 we will be doing on a grand scale is making purchases on our
12 credit card and deferring payments to later when hefty
13 interest is added to our already high interest costs. The
14 highest cost in our budget today is for schools. The next
15 highest is public safety. The third highest is interest on
16 our accumulated debt. Will we pay our new debt by cutting
17 teachers or maintenance for schools? Will we short change
18 public safety? How many current police or firefighters are
19 surplus that we really don't need? Or will we cut other
20 services such as libraries, parks, road maintenance? Our
21 roads are already in very poor shape and we're told there
22 are not sufficient funds for all currently needed
23 maintenance, so maintenance needs increase as we continue to
24 defer needed maintenance.

25 What about social services for those in need?

1 Will we throw them under the bus, so to speak? How will we
2 afford the substantial debt? High income residents are
3 leaving our County now. In part, I'm told, because of our
4 high taxes compared to surrounding counties and states. Are
5 we trying to push out more by substantially raising our
6 taxes? Our highest priority should be to keep our, get our
7 fiscal house in order. We need to pay down our billions of
8 dollars in current debt in today's low interest environment
9 before we begin a misguided effort to build some grand
10 scheme of additional transportation systems with new
11 vehicles and staff while interest rates eventually return to
12 normal or higher levels.

13 We need many more specifics about this proposal.
14 The generalities to date are not sufficient. We should
15 never create an independent agency with wide authority to
16 establish its own procedures and procurement policies and be
17 able to condemn property and set taxes with virtually no
18 oversight. Even assuming our current County officials would
19 make good judgments in selecting the initial ITA members,
20 this ITA would go on forever under the eventual control of
21 who knows? If our County Department of Transportation
22 cannot plan and supervise transportation systems that we
23 need, hire people who can, but keep them under our current
24 fiscal controls of an elected County Executive and elected
25 County Council. Don't give away the store or the keys to go

1 with it.

2 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Ms. Piety. Ms. Barron.

3 MS. BARRON: Hello. I'm Donna Barron from Scale
4 It Back.com. With the emphasis on transit in today's world,
5 my guess is that a well-planned community supported transit
6 line would have a good chance of receiving State and Federal
7 funding. And we have a fully functional transportation
8 department and transit system already. So why does
9 Montgomery County need an independent transit authority that
10 can fund unsupported transit lines by going over the tax
11 cap? One reason is the poorly planned corridor city transit
12 way with its long convoluted alignment that is unlikely to
13 attract riders.

14 Montgomery County is hell bent on building a CCT
15 because, I suspect, it may be part of the support required
16 by the deal cooked up by Johns Hopkins in Montgomery County
17 back in the 1980s when they put together their plan to
18 snooker Elizabeth Banks out of her family's land called
19 Belward Farm. Johns Hopkins has no plan to build the
20 academic campus on Belward despite repeated promises to Mrs.
21 Banks. Mrs. Banks was adamant that she did not want
22 commercial development on her farm, but soon after her
23 death, the County at the request of Johns Hopkins rezoned
24 the property for a commercial office complex for 15,000
25 people. Belward Farm is adjacent to four established

1 residential neighborhoods and is five miles from the nearest
2 Metro station. So Hopkins needs a marketing tool to try to
3 entice companies to lease property on Belward Farm. Thus
4 far, without success. Hence, the urgency for construction
5 of the corridor city transit way. Apparently the Inter-
6 County Connector, ICC, was not enough and the university
7 still has its hand out. State and County officials have
8 said in private that nobody is expected to ride the CCT. A
9 gentleman from the Clarksburg Chamber of Commerce said the
10 people of Clarksburg won't ride it. The CEO of MedImmune
11 declined to have a CCT station or a pedestrian bridge
12 because his employees said they prefer to drive. With
13 minimal or no parking at the stations, we have been told the
14 CCT is not, not being built for commuters, AKA the
15 residents. This billion dollar boondoggle is simply a very
16 expensive marketing tool for Johns Hopkins which is a very
17 well-funded organization. The university can well afford to
18 fund its own shuttle just like many corporations and
19 universities instead of expecting the taxpayers of
20 Montgomery County to foot the bill. If Hopkins steps up to
21 fund their own shuttle, the CCT would not be necessary.
22 Those funds would then be available to fund a well-planned
23 community support transportation system in our area or
24 elsewhere in the County. Thank you.

25 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Ms. Barron. Ms.

1 Ginsburg.

2 MS. GINSBURG: My name is Amy Ginsburg and I am
3 the executive director of Friends of White Flint, a non-
4 profit organization with nearly 1,300 supporters, including
5 residents, businesses, homeowners associations and property
6 owners. Our only mission is to insure the full
7 implementation of the White Flint sector plan so that the
8 promise of a walkable, transit oriented, smart growth
9 community is achieved in the Pike district.

10 A rapid transit system is critical to creating an
11 energetic, prosperous community in the Pike district. RTS
12 is indispensable for improving the quality of life for a
13 growing population and to attracting businesses and
14 retailers to the Pike district. In fact, 7,400 residential
15 units in both the White Flint 1 and White Flint 2 sectors
16 are linked to developing, developing an RTS along Route 355.
17 We need to provide Montgomery County with the ability to
18 efficiently and quickly create the kind of walkable transit-
19 friendly community so important to our future. Just as a
20 bread needs a baker, RTS needs a transit authority which we
21 believe is a strong option for managing this complex system.

22 Moving forward with RTS is vital for both the
23 County and the White Flint area. Many employees and
24 residents, especially millennials, want to ditch their cars.
25 RTS will enable many of them to do just that. Traffic

1 doesn't attract business to Montgomery County. Transit
2 options and walkable communities like the Pike district do.
3 Creating jobs is the key to enabling Montgomery County to
4 remain competitive and sustainable in the future. RTS is
5 the key to attracting those businesses and creating those
6 jobs. In fact, studies have shown that after factoring in
7 the cost of RTS, the County will net \$871 million in revenue
8 over 25 years.

9 There are many thorny issues to work out,
10 including funding. But I urge Montgomery County to make
11 rapid transit on Rockville Pike a top priority. We believe
12 that bus rapid transit on Route 355 should be the first
13 line. A successful Rockville Pike line will demonstrate how
14 RTS can have a positive impact in a highly visible manner.
15 Fortunately, the White Flint area has the density,
16 commercial development and support to be a successful pilot.
17 Such a pilot program on Route 355 will make it easy to see
18 how a rapid transit system can create a vibrant, thriving
19 community. From all of at The Friends of White Flint, thank
20 you for your continued support of transit and the White
21 Flint sector plan.

22 MR. WINSTON: Thank you very much, Ms. Ginsburg.
23 Ms. Finnegan.

24 MS. FINNEGAN: Hello. Good evening to all. I am
25 Eileen Finnegan. I serve as the chair of the Land Use

1 Committee for the Hillandale Citizens Association.

2 Our association actively participated in the White
3 Oak Science Gateway Master Plan and the countywide transit
4 corridor's functional master plan. It seems as though we've
5 been master planned to death. We support additional
6 development and improved transit for our area, including the
7 New Hampshire Avenue corridor. But funding these dreams has
8 always been the challenge. And over the years many promises
9 have been made. Chief among those were that development
10 would pay. Development would provide the money. Recently
11 County Council President Leventhal framed the discussion in
12 a more holistic manner. Given the County Executive's
13 warning of a large property tax increase in the coming year,
14 the purple line's funding questions and the lack of
15 certainty on the design and cost of four of the five RTS
16 routes included in this report, more thought, more time and
17 far more outreach to all the stakeholders and all the
18 residents should be given to this very significant proposal.

19 It's really time to hear and engage with the
20 County Executive. Is Mr. Leggett really advocating a \$2.2
21 billion five corridor system to be built over the next 10 or
22 12 years? Does Mr. Leggett believe that the added debt
23 service is affordable for the County while he's advocating
24 for greater restraint in the County's own budget? Does Mr.
25 Leggett believe that relying heavily on residential property

1 taxes to support this huge project is it fair and equitable?
2 Why has Mr. Leggett's Task Force declined to thoroughly
3 review alternative funding mechanisms, such as a per
4 employee fee or a per dwelling unit fee, especially when
5 we're going to become more dense? Higher commercial
6 property tax rates should be considered and very much we
7 need to consider development specific charges. What about
8 the broader regional approach? Success of several routes
9 will only be possible with regional cooperation. Why not
10 have regional money?

11 We are anxious for Mr. Leggett to engage broadly
12 with the community on all these points. And I thank you.

13 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Ms. Finnegan. Mr.
14 Jarosinski.

15 MR. JAROSINSKI: Yes. My name is Paul Jarosinski.
16 I'm president of the Cherrywood Homeowners Association, a
17 606 unit, HOA located in the Olney area of Montgomery
18 County. I'm here to voice our community opposition to the
19 independent taxing transit authority. In addition to being
20 an end run around the County charter limits on taxes, it is
21 putting the cart before the horse in terms of financing an
22 exorbitant bus replacement theory, but no community at large
23 has fully endorsed.

24 In Olney, the plan was soundly rejected when we
25 learned that more than 75 percent of the businesses along

1 the route in Olney would have been displaced. Transit
2 enthusiasts talk about the BRT mistakes made in Olney that
3 were essentially the State marked the businesses that would
4 be displaced with a red X on their drawing. This
5 devastation was not posted online. And if not for one
6 citizen who photographed the map, the Olney BRT could be
7 near construction. This should be a warning to businesses
8 and residents that are along the routes of other BRT routes.
9 Insist to see the hidden displacement plans.

10 It is quite clear that the BRT is more of a
11 redevelopment plan than a transit plan. One only needs to
12 read the executive summary of the Sage report, Appendix A to
13 the TTF report to learn that 70 percent of the housing
14 potential and 65 percent of the commercial potential are
15 clearly reasonably linked to the BRT. It is a bonanza for
16 developers with the County taxpayers footing the bill and
17 held responsible for the debt hidden from the bond agencies.
18 The TTF could be a good spirit for a crime movie. You have
19 a County that has spent to their legal limit and run up the
20 debt to their legal limit. How do you solve the problem?
21 You create a shell game with a parallel shadow government
22 agency where you hand pick five stooges to count out, to
23 carry out your desires while hiding the debt in a quasi-
24 governmental agency with the poor taxpayers holding the bag
25 for all the bad decisions. Page 22 specifically states that

1 the ITA is "important in order to prevent debt incurred by
2 the Transit Authority from being considered as County debt
3 by County auditors, bond rating agencies and other fiscal
4 oversight bodies." In short, the plan, the County plans to
5 hide debt in the ITA and leave the property tax holders
6 holding the bag. It is hard to imagine that this is even
7 legal or that the debt overseers are that stupid.

8 Three years ago, the Executive commissioned the
9 IDT report on the BRT. This consultant group reported a
10 lack of need for the BRT and recommended that the County
11 build one corridor where they thought the need was the
12 highest and show proof of concept. We would argue that the
13 County should follow that advice and finance the plan in the
14 usual way without a duplicative parallel shell agency.
15 Developers benefitting from the BRT should pay an increased
16 impact tax to support this effort. Other than this, the
17 County should revolutionize their bus system like was done
18 in Houston for only \$1 million rather than several billion.
19 Eliminating left turns on Rockville Pike to build a slow
20 speed, at grade, duplicative bus service adjacent to a high
21 speed underground Metro system makes no sense to most
22 prudent people.

23 I would like to end with a quote from page 46 of
24 the TTF report. "It is essential that debt incurred to
25 implement the RTS not be carried on the County's balance

1 sheet. If the debt were to be carried on the County's
2 balance sheet, it would be subject to the County charter,
3 debt affordability limits and other technical requirements
4 relating to the debt. In short, the purpose of the ITA is
5 to skirt the law and hide the debt. This leaves many County
6 residents with a clear indication that dissension is the
7 center point of the County's ITA/BRT process. We oppose the
8 plan. Thank you.

9 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Jarosinski. And
10 thank you to this panel. We will call up the next panel.

11 And that is Mr. Winstead, Robert Nelson, Dan Reed,
12 Edna Miller and Gino Renne. And Mr. Renne has indicated
13 that he does not wish to testify. Now before, before this
14 panel begins, let me mention that there, there will have
15 been two of the 50 persons listened on the speakers list who
16 will not be presenting and therefore we will go to the first
17 two names on the waiting list, Robert Dyer and Jasmine
18 Pearson. So if they are here, I wanted to let them know
19 that they will be invited to testify with, in the next panel
20 if they wish. So let us begin with Mr. Winstead.

21 MR. WINSTEAD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members
22 of the Task Force. I'm David Winstead and I'm here on
23 behalf of the White Flint Partnership which is a, an
24 organization and group with developers of Saul Centers,
25 Federal Realty, Gable Residential, JBG Companies, Lerner

1 Enterprises and Tower Companies in the White Flint Sector
2 Plan area who together with residents and businesses, as Amy
3 Ginsburg and the prior panel indicated, are committed to the
4 efforts to see the rapid transit vehicle system being
5 considered and proposed by the Task Force to be implemented
6 in a timely manner. The White Flint Partnership is, is
7 supportive and interested and very much working with the
8 Task Force as well as the vision that was set by the
9 Council, the adoption of the master County transit master
10 plan.

11 As a former State Transportation official, I've
12 got to just provide a perspective on, on RTV as I see it
13 both in this recommendation and nationwide. We recently
14 last Monday, we actually had a forum with the National Bus
15 Rapid Transit Institute and the top senior guy at Federal
16 Transit Administration, career guy, who explained how much
17 these systems are in fact growing around the country because
18 they can be implemented in segments, they're very cost
19 effective and they go to the, some of the objectives that we
20 saw in the Task Force report on pages 12 and 13 in terms of
21 the payoff in transit ridership in our region which has the
22 highest congestion in the country. So I, I do commend the
23 Task Force for all of the work that its done. I, I think we
24 recognize that this system can be a very modern, cost
25 effective way to connect residents to workers, Federal

1 campuses, as increasing numbers of Federal employees and
2 communities along the proposed Phase 1 corridor as well as
3 in the case of White Flint, ultimately allow for the build-
4 out of 39,000 jobs and providing a model IT, ITS system here
5 in the County, which I think is, is very, very beneficial.
6 I think recognizing the growth, Maryland, Montgomery County
7 accounts for 17 percent of the growth in the State of
8 Maryland. It is in so many ways economic engine of the
9 State recognized at every level as such. And I think what
10 we, what we must recognize that a part of that growth is
11 also the amount of Federal employment in the area. One out
12 of every 10 jobs are Federal employees. And what I see with
13 this Phase 1 proposal is a, not only a connection for the
14 residents, and several of the community groups have
15 addressed that, but also a connection between these economic
16 engines along the, obviously the 29 corridor and 355 South
17 and the CCT.

18 A comment about value capture. You know, the
19 report addresses it. In fact, you have in the White Flint
20 sector and the White Flint partnership a special tax already
21 in place in which the developers are committing \$169 million
22 to pay for transportation and transit needs in the White
23 Flint sector, including obviously infrastructure support and
24 RTV and 355 South. So basically it's critical, I believe,
25 to expand the tax base, improve quality of life through a

1 system like this which will in fact improve quality of life.
2 I, I will mention that the Partnership does support the
3 organizational structure, but we do have concerns about some
4 of the proposed funding, one of which obviously is that a
5 tax is already in place in White Flint, already contributing
6 over the years \$169 million. The Task Force should be
7 commended for all the hard work. The White Flint
8 Partnership stands ready to help you all in the years ahead
9 as well as the Council and the State. And I think the
10 Partnership is local, State, Federal, business and residents
11 going forward. So I thank you for this opportunity. And I
12 also provided a more elaborate statement.

13 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Winstead. Mr.
14 Nelson.

15 MR. NELSON: My name is Robert Nelson from Goshen.
16 The Transit Task Force has made a fine effort of developing
17 a plan for expanding the network of public transportation in
18 Montgomery County. But as a resident of the Upcounty, I see
19 very little benefit to our area and a massive diversion of
20 capital funding that should be allocated to long deferred
21 highway projects such as the completion of the partially
22 built Midcounty Highway to connect with Snowden Farm Parkway
23 and Clarksburg. The travel time on the CCT from Clarksburg
24 to Shady Grove Metro is twice what it would take on the M-83
25 Master Plan route. The estimated cost of the nine mile

1 Phase 1 of the CCT is twice that of completing M-83 on the
2 Master Plan route. The goal for Montgomery County should be
3 to decrease overall congestion so that a very expensive RTS
4 network is no longer necessary. Certainly the use of
5 telecommuting can reduce the number of business related
6 trips. Technology should be immediately implemented on the
7 current bus network, such as speeding fare collection with
8 electronically interactive customer payment systems,
9 providing real time route information and giving priority of
10 traffic signalization. The implementation of ramp metering
11 in other states has improved traffic flow and safety by 25
12 percent. More dynamic algorithms to control traffic signals
13 and active lane signalization, as recently implemented in
14 Virginia, can greatly improve the movement of traffic. Why
15 has very cost effective, available technology not been
16 implemented first before considering a proposal that
17 significantly increases the debt load and yearly operating
18 cost for Montgomery County?

19 Public/Private partnerships are very successful
20 utilized elsewhere. But why were they rejected for RTS
21 Phase 1? I didn't see any reference to the Transit Task
22 Force integrating ride sharing into transit services or
23 discussing some privatization options as has been done in
24 jurisdictions around the country. Could commercial
25 companies like Uber, Lyft, Bridge and Leap Transit offer

1 efficient on-demand bus transportation services for
2 customers with resources rather than burdening taxpayers
3 with an RTS that promises only a 25 percent fare box
4 recovery rate? More jobs are located in Montgomery County
5 than in any other jurisdiction in Maryland. Yet, your
6 report states that "Montgomery County will absorb a larger
7 portion of the cost of this infrastructure program than is
8 typical on state highways." Already we have over 50 percent
9 more people using public transportation than Fairfax County.
10 And technological improvements to the current transportation
11 network should boost ridership even more. I urge you to
12 take action now to reduce overall traffic congestion with
13 available technology on all bus routes and to accelerate the
14 completion of multi-decade delayed highway improvements so
15 that all residents of Montgomery County may benefit from the
16 expenditure of their tax dollars. Thank you.

17 MR. WINSTON: Thank You, Mr. Nelson. Mr. Reed.

18 MR. REED: Evening everybody. I'll try and keep
19 it short because I know you all have been here a while. My
20 name is Dan Reed. I'm a transportation planner. I'm on the
21 Board of the Action Committee for Transit. I'm on the Route
22 29 South Citizens Advisory Committee. And I'm also a
23 homeowner in downtown Silver Spring.

24 And I'm asking you this evening that it's kind of
25 okay for you to raise my taxes because I actually think this

1 is worth it. You know, we, some of the speakers this
2 evening have, have spoken about a better transit as if it's
3 this sort of extravagant luxury to give people a better
4 commute to work or better access to friends or family,
5 amenities or shops and restaurants in this County. I don't
6 think that's the case at all. You know, at various times
7 today I have taken the Metro. I took the S-2 bus. I rode a
8 bike. I walked and I had a lovely hour long drive from
9 Burtonsville, where my brother's high school is, to downtown
10 Silver Spring this morning in traffic and I thank my lucky
11 stars I don't live up there anymore so I don't have to do
12 that every day.

13 But what about the people who do? You know, a lot
14 of folks this evening have talked about their neighbors and
15 their friends and people they know who, who don't really use
16 transit and they are convinced that people aren't really
17 going to use this service. Well, let me tell you about my
18 mother. She's 54. She's an immigrant from Guyana. Her
19 family has been in this country for 40 years. She has more
20 degrees than most of the people in this room, I'm sure.
21 She's a real estate agent. She's been one for 30 years.
22 And she, my dad and she, they own three cars. And she takes
23 the bus. She takes the bus from our house in White Oak to
24 downtown Silver Spring. And by the way, she's super excited
25 about the White Oak Master Plan. And she takes the bus from

1 Silver Spring into D.C. Why? Because she doesn't want to
2 deal with traffic and she doesn't want to deal with parking.
3 And me? As much as I love my car, I am my mother's son. I
4 don't like those things either.

5 And there are a lot of people who are moving into
6 this County who feel the same way. And there are so many
7 people who could benefit from this, from having another
8 option. BRT isn't the solution and nobody is saying that.
9 It fits into a larger scheme of transportation options,
10 including Metro, including MARC, including the buses that we
11 already have, both Ride On and Metro bus, including the
12 express commuter buses we already have, including biking and
13 walking, and of course, private cars too. I drove here
14 today. I've no other way to get here. I checked the Uber
15 app to see how long or how much it would cost to get from
16 downtown Rockville to my house and it quoted \$18 to \$24. I
17 mean driving is cheaper than that. Taking the bus is even
18 cheaper than that. Given the choice, why would you take
19 Uber for anything but really short trips? Why would you
20 make that something to build your life around? That's not
21 the only solution.

22 You know, I am eager to hear more about the
23 different funding proposals for the ITA. I'm eager to hear
24 how much exactly you're proposing to be placed on homeowners
25 such as myself, but I'm willing to have that conversation

1 and I'm not willing to shut it down because I think that
2 better transit is something we absolutely cannot afford to
3 ignore in this County. Thank you.

4 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Reed. Edna Miller.

5 MS. MILLER: Hello. How about that? Okay. I am
6 Edna Miller, a Connecticut native, and a 13-year Maryland
7 resident who achieved four occupations before retiring.
8 Transportation became my focus while retirement allowed for
9 research and study of transportation issues. Rapid transit
10 system features a modern, large capacity low to the ground
11 vehicle that carries passengers comfortably, quietly and
12 quickly due to dedicated lanes and electric power. An
13 independent transit authority start-up to manage rapid
14 transit system requires a commitment to quality customer
15 service. A credential of interest when selecting candidates
16 for an ITA should possess bus rapid transit expertise, other
17 rapid transit business experience and smarter growth
18 knowledge. In order for ITA to secure financing for RTS or
19 corridor cities transit way, they must attract big
20 investors. Therefore, an independent business approach is
21 certain. Starting an ITA business model demands an economic
22 heart separated from County budget variations and political
23 differences. To move population growth in the right
24 direction, an ITA must deliver a superior bus, a superior
25 rapid transit system that supports residential desirability

1 and economic viability.

2 Creating dedicated RTS lanes on 355 North and 355
3 South would reinforce fast, rapid transit service. When ITA
4 establishes an affordable high speed, high quality and safe
5 rapid transit system, many will come to rely on this
6 service. Volume ridership should significantly reduce
7 congested roads. This means air, water, and our quality of
8 life can be significantly improved. During the 2015
9 Transportation Forum in Virginia, people came from Maryland,
10 Virginia and D.C. to hear eight speakers on future of
11 transit and transit crossing boundaries. ITA will need to
12 review and decide if a crossing boundaries concept is right
13 for their long range plan. Someday ITA may want the rapid
14 transit system connected to purple line, to Virginia transit
15 and Frederick County transit. Thank you for considering my
16 comments. I much appreciate your efforts to improve our
17 quality of life and mobility in the County.

18 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Ms. Miller. And that
19 concludes the statements of this panel. We thank you.

20 And before, before we move to our next speakers, I
21 want to ask the Task Force what its pleasure is with regard
22 to our waiting list? I know it may seem hard to believe,
23 but we are moving ahead more quickly than we might have
24 expected this evening. And so I, I propose to continue to
25 move through the waiting list beyond the original two that I

1 mentioned earlier to those others who may be here so we can
2 try to get as many people, give as many people as possible
3 an opportunity to speak. If there's no objection to that,
4 I'll, I'll proceed in that fashion.

5 Let me call then another panel. Robert Dyer,
6 Jasmine Pearson, Donald Gerson, Emma Gains-Gerson and Anita
7 Morrison. Please come to the table at the front if you are
8 here.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's Mr. Dyer.

10 MR. WINSTON: Mr. Dyer.

11 MR. DYER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of
12 the Task Force. I thought the latest report casually
13 dismissed the very serious issue of the higher cost of bonds
14 for an ITA and has not addressed the equally serious matter
15 of the ITA's ability to carry unlimited debt. What happens
16 if it defaults or the County's ability to shift unlimited
17 amounts of debt to the ITA? But the fundamental question
18 remains the justification of exceeding our Charter limit,
19 especially given our structural deficit and already
20 outrageous levels of regressive taxation. Especially when
21 more effective solutions are affordable without exceeding
22 the cap, such as we know that Metro's success is largely
23 subsidized transit and if we're going to spend billions, we
24 should be looking seriously at providing similar free or
25 subsidized transit on existing or expanded Ride On. The

1 recent tabling of the Master Plan route of the M-83 highway
2 is unconscionable as well as the attempt to remove the
3 outrageous, or revive the outrageous plan to demolish homes
4 in the Goshen area for an alternative road when the Master
5 Plan route already has a right-of-way.

6 The County talks transit, but keeps cutting bus
7 routes Up County. The M-83 or a new Potomac River crossing
8 could each be built for less than the cost of BRT and they
9 would each carry more commuters daily than the entire BRT
10 network combined. The Potomac crossing could even be free
11 if built as a private toll facility and it would, that would
12 remove up to 25 percent of the traffic on the American
13 Legion Bridge. Far more relief than BRT would ever, we
14 don't have solid ridership data to justify BRT, but we do
15 have solid numbers on its impact. Congestion is forecast to
16 increase 70 percent on County roads. BRT will reduce
17 automobile capacity by 33 percent on its routes and BRT
18 proponents' most optimistic forecast for number of drivers
19 who would switch to BRT is 16 percent. Take out a
20 calculator if necessary, but those numbers don't add up.
21 You would spend billions and roads would be more congested
22 when you are finished, not less.

23 The Council has the authority to unanimously vote
24 to exceed the charter limit today. If they don't have the
25 guts to do that for BRT, that tells us how confident they

1 are in the success of BRT. Thank you.

2 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Dyer. And we'll move
3 on to the next five names on our list to become the next
4 panel. Cary Lamari, Jon Halpern, Richard Jurgena, Lisa
5 Cline and John Bickerman. If any of them are here. I see
6 at least we have one. Your name, sir?

7 MR. JURGENA: My name is Dick Jurgena. I live in
8 Darnestown, Maryland.

9 MR. WINSTON: Mr. Jurgena, welcome to the Task
10 Force.

11 MR. JURGENA: I appreciate the opportunity to
12 address you this evening. I represent the 48 members of the
13 Montgomery County Republican Central Committee. We were
14 elected to represent the over 122,000 Republicans in
15 Montgomery County.

16 We are concerned that the BRT is an effort to
17 commit funds to later provide an excuse to promote the ITA
18 to which we are adamantly opposed. As I testified at the
19 hearing before the Montgomery County State legislators last
20 spring, we don't believe there's enough lipstick in
21 Montgomery County to make this pig acceptable to County
22 voters.

23 The last sentence of your conclusions demonstrate
24 your intent very clearly. Your recommendations that
25 enabling legislation be adopted by the General Assembly and

1 that the County government invoke legislation to create and
2 empower the transit authority tells it all. I'm not an
3 Arab, but I can recognize a camel when it pokes its nose
4 under my tent. I believe our problem with our bus
5 transportation system has more to do with mismanagement than
6 with how fast our buses get from one end of the route to the
7 other. I spent a lot of time on the street corners last
8 year. I was amazed at how many buses I saw on the road with
9 three and four riders during rush hour and yes, they were
10 going with the rush hour traffic. According to the ITDP
11 study, even the most promising proposed BRT route, the 355
12 route, has only a current ridership of 250 passengers per
13 hour as opposed to the recommended minimum of 1,200
14 passengers to be successful. I understand some of your
15 members are already aware of the successes the city of
16 Houston has had in improving its efficiency in ridership at
17 no additional cost. I urge you to consider their solutions
18 while keeping in mind the number of communities who are
19 scrapping their current BRT systems as failures.
20 Considering none of the proposed routes meet the minimum
21 passengers requirements and other less costly options exist,
22 an increase in ridership will be a long time coming. The
23 number of cities who are scrapping their BRT systems I
24 believe that as soon as the general public becomes more
25 informed of these findings, those of you who support the BRT

1 can look forward to a short ride out of town on a public
2 rail system after a quick bath in tar and feathers. Thank
3 you for your attention.

4 MR. WINSTON: Thank you, Mr. Jurgena, I think.
5 Just the prospect to that ride out of town is interesting.

6 Jonathan, you have a question of Mr. Jurgena?

7 MR. GENN: No. That's all right. I, you made a
8 comment that I'm curious to know about. You say there are
9 communities scrapping BRT systems because of their failures.

10 MR. JURGENA: Yeah.

11 MR. GENN: I'm not aware of that so if you could,
12 can you tell us which ones are scrapping the BRT systems?

13 MR. WINSTON: Please sit down with the microphone
14 so that, yeah, would you, would you come around and use a
15 mic and repeat the question so that it can be heard?

16 MR. GENN: I was just curious, Mr. Jurgena. You
17 made the, Jurgena?

18 MR. JURGENA: That's correct.

19 MR. GENN: Yeah, Jurgena.

20 MR. JURGENA: That, of course, not the government
21 or --

22 MR. GENN: All right. You had made a comment that
23 there are communities scrapping BRT systems around the
24 country because of their failures and it's the first time
25 I've, I've heard that so I would be, you know, very, it's

1 important information. So we'd like to know what
2 communities are scrapping BRT systems because they're
3 failures.

4 MR. JURGENA: I'll be happy to send you that
5 information. I don't have it with me. There are about six
6 or seven communities that were listed. I think one is, I
7 think, don't hold me to this, but I think one is Portland,
8 Oregon. But I don't know the others. But I'll send those
9 to you.

10 MR. WINSTON: Okay. Our next, our last two names
11 on the waiting list are Steve Corsini and Raymond Vincent.
12 If either of them are here? And they are not.

13 Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes the list of
14 speakers for this evening's public forum. We thank all of
15 you very much for participating. And the Task Force will be
16 meeting on October 7th to commence a final review of its
17 public draft. Again, the public record for comments on the
18 public draft is open through October 6th, and I, I know that
19 members of the Task Force have been reviewing the public
20 comments as they have been submitted on the Task Force
21 website. Again, thank you all very much and good evening.

22 (Whereupon, at 9:01 p.m., the proceeding was
23 concluded.)

24

25

CERTIFICATE

DEPOSITION SERVICES, INC., hereby certifies that the attached pages represent an accurate transcript of the electronic sound recording of the proceedings before the Department of Transportation for Montgomery County in the matter of:

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Consuella Miles". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Consuella Miles, Transcriber